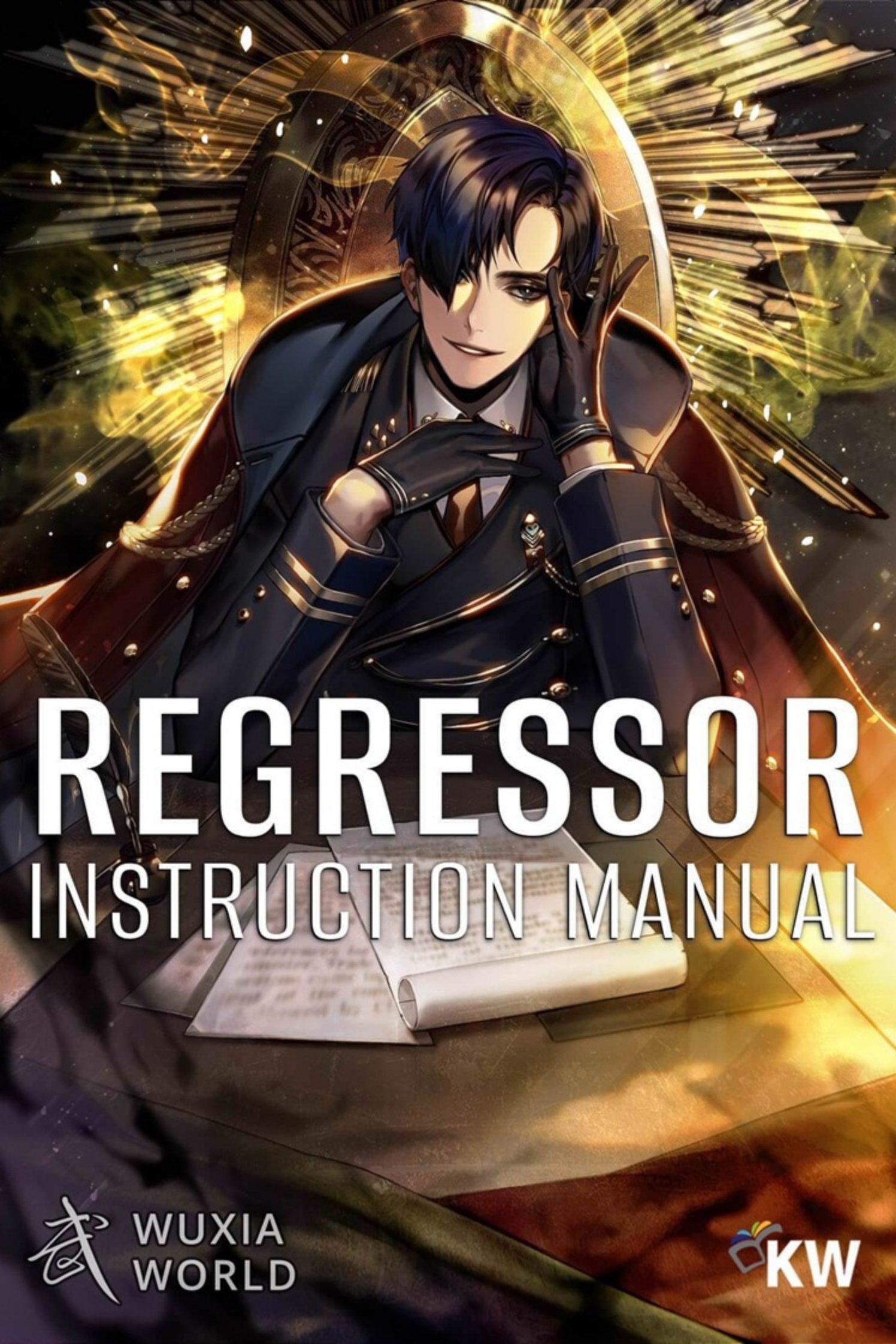

REGRESSOR
INSTRUCTION MANUAL
WUXIA WORLD
KW

REGRESSOR INSTRUCTION MANUAL

– 회귀자 사용설명서 –

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[WUXIAWORLD]

CHAPTER 402
MORALE BOOST (1)

"You're in a better condition than I thought," I pointed out.

"But there's nothing I can do about the exhaustion. I wouldn't say I'm in the worst condition, but it's hard to stay optimistic. I'd like to relax a little, but we're not in the situation to do that…" Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"You're right," I said, nodding.

Kim Hyun-Sung nodded as well. Lee Ji-Hye had told him that she would do whatever she could, but he still seemed anxious. I was worried that he would show that traumatized side of him again, but thankfully, he didn't do that. If he was just with the both of us, I was sure he would talk about it right away, but he was currently moving with the other soldiers, so he couldn't talk about it. I wasn't dissing Kim Hyun-Sung, but I realized that even he had a brain.

'That's right, Hyun-Sung.'

"We'll arrive in a few hours, and they know that we're currently heading that way."

"Is there…"

"No. Of course, there's no guarantee that a battle like earlier won't happen again, but from here to our destination, the terrain isn't suitable for ambushes. The enemy soldiers we encountered just now are doing nothing more than buying time. Sending other soldiers toward us won't be an easy decision for the Republic anyway, and I'm sure they had already obtained everything they wanted through the fight just now," the soldier explained.

"What did they obtain exactly?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

"Information, time, and condition," the soldier replied.

"*Ah*…"

“It’s true that we’re under pressure, but they can’t relax either. I’m sure they’re mentally under pressure. They’re pushing the Western Front and Northern Front, but I’m sure they want to recover their investment into Castle Rock. If we get lucky…”

“This could be the final battle,” he said.

“Yes, and even if the war continues, it won’t go the way things are going right now,” they added.

‘That’s a very cautious way of thinking.’

I couldn’t help but think that way more and more because we weren’t the only ones whose lives were at stake in the upcoming battle. If anything, the demon summoner would definitely make things worse for us. He probably sent those extra soldiers over here to try to delay us, but he was definitely trying to figure out our exact tactic. Basically, it was bait to find out exactly what cards we were holding, and we had already revealed to them the majority of our cards. The tactical Kim Hyun-Sung was our strongest card. I wanted to hide him, but…

‘We weren’t in a situation where we could hide him.’

If we hadn’t dispatched Kim Hyun-Sung to the battlefield, it was highly likely that we would still be in battle right now. I was sure Jin Cheong knew that we were anxious. I knew he was trying to get information while using Castle Rock as bait, but we still fell for his cheap trick. It was a cheap move that would definitely make people fall for it. Of course, it was pretty effective. The fact that we couldn’t figure out the exact number of soldiers at Castle Rock right now was an extension of that, and when evaluating the overall situation, the Republic was ahead of us.

“*Ah!*”

“Are you okay?” Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“Yes… I’m fine,” I replied.

‘Shit… how embarrassing.’

I almost slipped because I was lost in my thoughts while walking, and it was a good thing Kim Hyun-Sung grabbed me before I fell. It would have been an embarrassment if I fell to the ground in front of the soldiers.

“Now that I think about it, you said you overdid it. Are you…”

“No, it’s nothing like that. I just slipped…” I said.

“You’re probably tired, but you just haven’t recognized it yet. It’s fine to work hard, but taking care of your body is more important than that. Perhaps you’re still under the influence of the Twisted Pond,” he explained.

“I’ll keep that in mind,” I told him.

“Your body doesn’t just belong to you, Mr. Ki-Young. You have to be more cautious,” he added.

Obviously, I realized he wasn’t saying that just to be polite because he looked genuinely worried about me. We had such a friendly air between us. The way he patted my back after pulling me up and spoke to me while smiling reminded me of a main character in romance comics. I finally understood why Kim Hyun-Sung’s harem was obsessed with him.

All of a sudden, I heard a gasp from behind me. I could also feel numerous eyes on my back. I looked back and saw soldiers staring at Kim Hyun-Sung and me. The majority of them were women, and some of them were elves. Speaking of the elves, it was amusing to see their ears quivering ever so slightly.

‘They remind me of Elena… ’

To be honest, the soldiers were in bad condition. The battle had just ended, but we were already marching without proper rest. However, when I saw their sparkling eyes, I realized once more that this war was incredibly important.

‘This is why a cause is important. Indeed. It’s a good thing we educated them on that.’

To be honest, the situation got worse when we started marching. However, Lee Ji-Hye was correct when she said that Kim Hyun-Sung and me doing the rounds would be effective in boosting morale. They reacted better than I expected, so even I was surprised. All we did was give out fatigue recovery potions and say a few things to them, but it had a great effect on the bases nearby as well as the bases that were a bit far. Of course, it wasn’t that I couldn’t understand why they were reacting this way.

It was a bit embarrassing to say this myself, but I was the official envoy of the gods. I

was chosen by the Goddess of Benigoa and Elune, so it was only natural for me to influence the soldiers positively, and I was even more influential to the elves, who were a really religious race.

I wonder what it was like for Kim Hyun-Sung. I was sure his influence wasn't as good as mine, but people were in awe of him. Kim Hyun-Sung's performance in the battle earlier had to have left a strong impression not only on the humans but on the other races as well. Their views were slightly different from humans, but humans weren't the only ones who respected those with power. It was the same for the elves, including the Elune Knights, and even more so for the dwarves. Basically, he was someone worthy of respect. If I were a swordsman, I would have looked at Kim Hyun-Sung with envy. In addition, walking together with the person one respected a lot would elevate one's mood. If the soldiers' Division Commander suddenly visited the base, I was sure the visit would annoy them, but this was completely different.

The important thing was that our presence provided a positive influence on the base, and that was the reason why we continued spending time with the soldiers while walking. Seeing the female elves react to Kim Hyun-Sung's every move made it seem like his good looks had captivated them. Every time he did something, I would hear them gasp, and I started to feel bitter at the fact that even this continent cared about looks as well. It was very clear that it was the case. Kim Hyun-Sung simply smiled, but the female soldiers were gasping and causing a stir among themselves.

'Stop it, man. Wait, why is her nose bleeding?'

There were even a few women staring at us while covering their bleeding noses, which caught me off guard. I wasn't sure if Kim Hyun-Sung noticed it, but he was busy telling them stories. The first time around, he was nervous, but the way he kept talking to them made me think that he wasn't nervous anymore. It also seemed like he missed mundane topics when I saw how he was talking about a variety of topics unrelated to the ongoing war.

"Are you interested in learning swordsmanship?" he asked.

"What?"

"Your eyes are better than I thought, Mr. Ki-Young. If you can see the opponent's attacks, you will definitely be able to block and counterattack," he said.

“No, I’m not really an athletic person…” I replied.

Kim Hyun-Sung talked about topics like this…

“I want to return to the Guild House as soon as possible,” he said.

“Me, too,” I agreed.

“I’d like to sleep for about three days,” he added.

“And not do anything?” I asked.

“Yes. I just want to sleep,” he replied.

“Your tasks will just pile up,” I commented.

“*Ah*.”

“I’m kidding. Miss Kim Mi-Young is doing pretty well at her job, so I’m sure you’ll be able to enjoy your break to your heart’s content,” I said.

Kim Hyun-Sung was talking about useless topics like this, but they had one thing in common—they were all ideas. They were ideas about what we wanted to do after the war, and no one would disagree that this was the most enjoyable conversation we could have considering our current situation.

‘So he’s human, too.’

I was sure he wanted to have this kind of conversation to enjoy the brief relaxing moment rather than erase the anxiety he was feeling from the many thoughts he was having. It was true that it was kind of fun and interesting to see him react this way because the image I had of Kim Hyun-Sung didn’t match his current behavior. After talking for a while, Kim Hyun-Sung changed the topic.

“By the way, Mr. Ki-Young.”

“Yes?”

“Have you visited Mr. Deok-Gu?” he asked.

“Not yet. I’m busy ever since I left Everia, so I didn’t have the luxury of taking care of others. Did something happen?” I asked.

“It’s not that something happened, but… I think it would be best if you visited him. He seemed troubled in many ways,” he replied.

‘It’s understandable… ’

“I think he’s having a hard time accepting the fact that we’re at war, and it’s his first time fighting against humans… He’s tender-hearted,” I explained.

‘The problem is that he’s too tender-hearted.’

If he weren’t strong, then it wouldn’t have been an issue. He was afraid of killing others rather than afraid of getting killed himself. I was sure he was thinking about useless things on the battlefield because ordinary swords and arrows couldn’t really hurt him. Of course, the biggest reason for all this was that he was just *too* kind, but I was sure that the Park Deok-Gu before the hidden camera prank would have swung his sword to survive.

‘It will be the same for the upcoming battle… ’

Lee Ji-Hye and I had been taking care of him as much as we could, but I couldn’t guarantee that we would have the luxury to do that again in the upcoming final battle. Perhaps it would be better for him not to participate in the upcoming battle.

Should I…

‘Should I exclude him from the formation?’

If he received a task to guard the rear of the command center, then I was sure that he would be able to do it without any issues. I had no time to think deeply about his issue because I had to think about the other guild members as well.

“How are the other guild members?” I asked.

“They’re adapting better than I thought, and…” Kim Hyun-Sung trailed off.

“*Ah*, right. That happened,” I commented.

“Miss Hye-Jin has become really famous. It’s really hard to see unicorns, so the elves were really moved when they saw her fighting on the battlefield while riding a unicorn. Spear of Purity. The nickname fits Miss Hye-Jin very well,” he continued.

“*Ah*, yes,” I said.

‘I’m sure she hates it, though.’

The word hate probably wasn’t enough to describe what she felt about her fame.

“What do you think, Mr. Ki-Young? Should we visit the guild members…?” he asked.

“Yes, I think we should do that. Anyway, I need to talk to Deok-Gu…” I answered.

“I’m sure it’ll be really helpful. *Ah! And*…”

“Yes?”

“You haven’t taken the fatigue recovery potion yet. You should drink one. Here,” he suggested, handing over a bottle of fatigue recovery potion.

‘Thanks for thinking of me, man.’

“No, I’m fi—”

I had already drank two bottles in secret, and I would be full if I drank more.

I was about to refuse the potion when I noticed the soldiers paying attention to us.

‘What the…?’

It felt like the entire base was telling me to accept the potion while watching us intently. I couldn’t help but feel that if I didn’t accept the offered potion, the morale of the base would plummet.

As a test, I pulled my hand back, and they sighed with disappointed looks.

‘What’s going on? Shit… ’

I had no choice. I reached out and took the potion from Kim Hyun-Sung’s hand, and

when I did that, the soldiers clapped and cheered quietly among themselves.

'What's up with them…?'

For some reason, my footsteps felt heavy as I walked away to find Park Deok-Gu.

CHAPTER 403
MORALE BOOST (2)

It had been a while since I saw the guild members, but they seemed like they were doing fine. I had no idea about Jung Ha-Yan and Han Sora's exact conditions because they went into the misty forest, but I could see that they were adapting pretty well based on their latest messages. Naturally, Han Sora was stressed because she had to stay with Jung Ha-Yan. Unfortunately for her, she was needed there.

'I do feel bad for her, but… '

Han Sora synergized well with Jung Ha-Yan, and she also became more efficient whenever she was with the latter, I was sure she felt really uncomfortable about the arrangement, but I couldn't separate them as their commander because of their great chemistry. I gave Han Sora hope that I would send her as far away as possible from Jung Ha-Yan, but it honestly wasn't easy to do that.

Yoo Ah-Young and Lee Chang-Ryeol, who were with Han Sora and Jung Ha-Yan, were also adapting really well. Yoo Ah-Young, who had high stamina stats and a legendary-ranked attribute, specialized in prolonged battles like this and even though Lee Chang-Ryeol didn't really stand out, he always did his part.

I wasn't on the battlefield with them, but they were impressive from what I could see from the magic hologram. Kim Ye-Ri and Jo Hye-Jin, who looked at Kim Hyun-Sung longingly, did well as expected. Sun Hee-Young was the same, and it wouldn't be strange if those three became the guild master of a small or medium clan.

'I'm not sure about him, but Ahn Ki-Mo is the same.'

If I had to rank them, the tier one members of the Blue Guild would be Kim Ye-Ri, Jo Hye-Jin, and Sun Hee-Young. Ahn Ki-Mo, who was originally part of the Red Mercenary Guild, and Park Deok-Gu's girlfriend, Hwang Jung-Yeon, the magic scholar, were tier one and a half or two and the rookie members, including Han Sora, were either tier two or three. Of course, this wasn't just limited to the Blue Guild. This was their tier if we divided the entire continent into seven tiers.

Obviously, I didn't include the Eight Seats or the Five Tiger Generals. It was useless to gauge those superhumans with a ranking like this.

'Park Deok-Gu… '

To be exact, he was one and a half. This meant that he would be tier one if I was being generous or tier two if I wasn't being generous. Unlike Sun Hee-Young, Jo Hye-Jin, and Kim Ye-Ri, who each had transcendent talent, he was the type who grew solely on effort alone.

His weakness was that his attack power was weak, but as a meat shield, he was way above the average. Of course, if I were asked whether he was performing well in this war, I would shake my head because having a weak attack only worked as an excuse if he were on the same level as other ordinary people. The average people couldn't block Park Deok-Gu's attack.

Jo Hye-Jin and Kim Ye-Ri knew how to pretend that they were in pain whenever they get injured, but the pig didn't blink an eye at any attacks, and if he wanted, I was sure he could act like a tyrant on the battlefield.

Despite that, it was absurd how he retreated, but I understood him. When I thought about his nature, it was only natural that he found it hard to withstand environments like this. I was kind of frustrated and annoyed at first, but…

'I have no choice but to accept it.'

It didn't matter what I would say, he would still have to make a decision on his own. If I had to push him to do something, then that would be nothing more than me forcefully pushing him to do things. The previous battle wasn't that bad, but it was highly likely that there would be an accident in the battle tomorrow.

Honestly, I wanted to tell him…

'I want to tell him to just go back to the command center.'

I was sure the day would come when I would have to force him, but it wasn't today. The front lines wouldn't fall just because we weren't there, and if the command center got attacked, we would have a meat shield, so it was a reasonable decision.

"So…"

“That’s right, Deok-Gu. You don’t need to participate in the upcoming battle. We’re going to create a separate detachment that will be stationed at the rear. They will have to be prepared for an ambush. It’ll be the same for Miss Ah-Young and Mr. Chang-Ryeol,” I explained.

“Is it okay for you to do that?” Jo Hye-Jin asked.

It technically wasn’t allowed, but…

‘That’s the best part about having power.’

I could make the impossible—possible. I knew it wasn’t fair, but I had never been the type to think about fairness in the first place, so pulling out a few of our guild members away from the battlefield wouldn’t be difficult for me.

Yoo Ah-Young and Lee Chang-Ryeol had a higher chance of dying on the battlefield than the others, so I had to pull them out. Fortunately, Kim Ye-Ri and Jo Hye-Jin nodded as if they agreed with my decision.

Ahn Ki-Mo looked happy as well because he was secretly worried about the rookies.

“That’s great. I was actually worried about them, and I’ll feel relieved if Mr. Deok-Gu is there to take care of them. Yes, I think that’ll work since the upcoming battle will be kind of different from the previous one,” Ahn Ki-Mo saId.

“Yeah. That’s. Good. And Hyun-Sung oppa made this decision?” Kim Ye-Ri asked.

“No, it’s the command center’s decision. We were considering the possibility of the rear command center getting in danger, so this is a just-in-case thing,” I replied.

“*Hm*, I see.”

“That’s the plan. *Ah!* Ye-Ri and Miss Hye-Jin will move with Mr. Hyun-Sung when the battle starts, but the two of you will likely get separated from him eventually,” I added.

“Really?” Kim Ye-Ri asked.

“Yeah, and Miss Hee-Young…”

“I just need to stay with Miss Elena, right?” Sun Hee-Young asked.

“Yes. I’m sure you’ll be safe with her,” I answered.

The safety of Elena was the entire army’s responsibility, but I was sure that Sun Hee-Young wouldn’t be in any danger.

I looked to my side and saw an ashamed and gloomy Park Deok-Gu. He had always been quick to catch on, so he definitely thought that the rear detachments were created because of him, but he didn’t argue with me.

“*Hm*… I-Is there anything special I need to do?” Park Deok-Gu asked.

“Nothing special. The status of the battle won’t change just because you’re not there,” I answered.

“Well… I have no choice since it’s the order of the command center…” he mumbled.

‘I think he really doesn’t want to be on the battlefield.’

Park Deok-Gu simply bit his lips and nodded. I would have been kind of annoyed if he were scared, but his actions aligned with his character, so I had no choice but to acknowledge it.

“*Um*…”

“It’s nothing, Deok-Gu. I just need you to carry out the task you’re given,” I told him.

“Don’t worry about that, and I-I’m sorry…” Park Deok-Gu apologized.

“No need to apologize because I feel more relieved having you by my side,” I said.

“Leave that part to me. I’ll make sure that they won’t be able to lay a finger on you, hyung-nim. I’ll make sure of that,” he said.

“Yeah, thanks.”

It was cute how Park Deok-Gu kept nodding, and I felt relieved as well. He thought I was going to scold him, but the result was the opposite. When I patted his shoulder as a way to encourage him, a faint smile appeared on his face.

It had been quite a while since I had the chance to talk to the other guild members, so I decided to postpone talking with Kim Hyun-Sung. I brought up a familiar topic, and everyone started talking. Sun Hee-Young sat next to me quietly, and Park Deok-Gu had to have gotten his energy back because he started joking around. The kid pretended like she wasn't interested, but she was listening intently more than anyone else. If I had to exaggerate, it was like we were a family.

'I do feel bad for Yul-Ha[1] *who is probably suffering back home… '*

Anyway, this was our current situation.

"Once the war is over… how about we go on a picnic?" Hwang Jung-Yeon suggested.

"I'm in, but where are we going?"

"I'm not sure. They say that the Mirror Lake at Senator Nabot's territory is pretty famous, so I think it would be a good idea to go on a boat ride there. What do you think, Sub Guild Master?" she asked.

"I think it's a good idea, Miss Jung-Yeon," I replied.

"It has been a long time since we started living in the Sacred Democratic Country, but we still haven't visited the Mirror Lake. It should be pretty, right? It sounds romantic," she commented.

We talked about various topics, but the root of the conversation was the same.

'Once the war is over, what should we do?'

It hadn't been that long since the war started, but I was sure everyone here was already thinking about what they would do after the war. Of course, the ordinary soldiers had to be thinking the same as well because I could see them whispering to each other while marching. The dwarves seemed a bit excited as well, and even the elves were doing the same thing. Seeing them smile made me think that they missed having these types of conversations, and it helped me realize that we had been having serious conversations all this time.

'It's a good thing I came here to meet them.'

Comforting the guild members bore fruit to a result, but it was an unseen result. I

thought this would be a waste of time, but I was glad I listened to Kim Hyun-Sung because it felt like my exhausted brain was becoming a bit refreshed. I was sure the guild members felt the same as well.

The sun started setting, and a certain nervousness filled the army.

'We're probably almost there.'

I was certain that we were close to our destination, and I was sure the command center had already informed the field commanders of each detachment that a fight was about to start. I heard the soldiers moving around busily. They were either regrouping or checking their supplies and equipment. I also saw soldiers praying, and it was the same for the guild members.

"I should get going. Be careful, everyone," Sun Hee-Young said.

"You too, Miss Hee-Young."

"I'm heading out as well, Sub Guild Master."

"Okay."

Sun Hee-Young and Hwang Jung-Yeon, who were part of the rear detachment, and Jo Hye-Jin, Kim Ye-Ri, and Ahn Ki-Mo, who were supposed to be at the front, started moving. They either hugged or shook hands, and it was a surprise, but Sun Hee-Young and Jo Hye-Jin seemed like they were best friends.

Naturally, I started moving as well, and as a heavy silence filled the army, I started hearing a loud noise far away from the other side.

Then, there was an explosion made with magic before the combined shouts of a large number of people pierced the air.

The terrain up ahead looked familiar. It looked slightly different from before, but I had definitely been here before.

We finally arrived at Castle Rock.

"Prepare for battle!"

“Prepare for battle! All detachments ready for battle!”

The commanders didn’t waste time by giving a speech. I would have to look at the situation to know exactly what was happening, but seeing that Lee Ji-Hye immediately gave the order to prepare for battle, the situation had to be urgent. I started walking in the opposite direction and saw the nervousness and determination on the soldiers’ faces.

Right now, I just had to pat their shoulders.

“Prepare for battle! Raise the banners! All units prepare to attack the enemy base!”

I hadn’t been paying much attention to it, but I finally realized how much pressure our soldiers were under.

The soldiers fixed their helmets and pointed their spears forward once the banners were raised. Buffs descended, and I could feel the mages mustering their mana. The troops were ready to march, and I could already deduce what order the command center was about to give.

My train of thought was interrupted by a loud roar.

“All troops, attack!”

There was a loud roar.

“All detachments! Attack!”

It was so loud it made my ears ring.

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1. Lee Ki-Young’s sister mentioned on ch1 ☜

CHAPTER 404
THE FINAL BATTLE (1)

I saw a sight to behold. I even felt like I had to march with the soldiers when I saw how they started charging while yelling.

“Charge!”

“Chaaarge!”

“*Aaaahhh!*”

“For the Goddess of Benigoa!”

Holy power poured on the cavalry as they rode on their horses. The ground shook, and a strange zeal started blooming from the allied forces. It was such a sight that I stared dumbly at it and forgot about how I should be heading over to the command center.

After a few moments, the enemy base started hurling spells at the allied forces. Our forces used shield magic to protect the troops. The amount of mana both sides were using was roughly the same. I had no idea if the enemy was moving their forces, but our troops managed to reach the enemy smoothly.

Our mages failed to protect each and every troop because I saw a few soldiers falling after being injured, but I knew this was bound to happen. Still, when I saw how the enemy forces were prepared to take on our allied forces with their shields up made it clear that they had been waiting for us.

They even set up traps against our cavalry in the form of spikes on the ground. A few cavalrymen fell, and our priests reacted quickly by sending over a wave of holy power to heal them. Unfortunately, there was no way we could guarantee their survival.

‘So far, it’s not so bad.’

I looked around, and it didn't take me long to realize what was going on. I wasn't ignoring Lee Ji-Hye's decision, but I had to know the overall situation.

The enemy used Castle Rock to bait us out because they wanted a large-scale battle. It was a stage Jin Cheong had created. It was designed in a way that would let him obtain the information he wanted as well as fight us whenever he wanted.

It was well-made, and I couldn't even tell which of us had the upper hand when it came to the quality and quantity of soldiers. When I saw how the enemy hadn't been going all out on the Siege of Castle Rock, it was safe to assume that I had made the right choice.

If the enemy had gone all-out to bring Castle Rock down, then we could have had more time to set up camp and revise our formation. We could have even established a front line while waiting for more reinforcements.

Of course, I was relieved that they hadn't been able to take over Castle Rock, but I couldn't help but feel uncomfortable by the fact that the situation was designed by that masked scum.

It was safe for us to assume that they had a hidden card up their sleeves or insurance. If I wanted this war to last longer, then I had to focus on blocking their path. As such, it was only right for me to orchestrate a plan that would drag this out. After all, I was sure the demon summoner's camp didn't want this war to last for too long.

Therefore, our interests were the same in some ways, and the only difference—which could become a problem was the difference between our information.

"Aren't you going in, hyung-nim? It'll be dangerous to stay out here," Park Deok-Gu asked.

"Yeah, I'm going in," I replied.

I nodded and headed inside the portable command center. I saw Lee Ji-Hye busily controlling the troops while monitoring the magic holograms. When she saw me, she spoke in a slightly annoyed tone.

"Took you long enough. Why are you just standing there? Come here and help me."

“I thought you’d be fine without me. By the way, how is it looking out there?” I asked.

“So-so. We succeeded in pushing our troops into the enemy forces, but—*Ah!* I like the fact that we haven’t received a lot of damage,” she replied.

“Then, what’s the problem?” I asked.

“The problem is that we aren’t having any problems. I’m anxious because they prepared a lot as well. Can you see the named players on the screen?” she asked.

Naturally, I looked at the goddess’ mirror and saw the named players she was talking about. I couldn’t see the Russian Park Deok-Gu, Xiaolin, or Jin Cheong, but players who were just as strong as them were on the battlefield.

“Some people I saw in Laios are here, and there are some unfamiliar faces…” I commented.

“We haven’t figured it all out yet. Seeing that they brought them over here from the many fronts of the Republic, it’s safe to say that they’re risking everything here. Thanks to that, those fronts have definitely gotten weakener. Unfortunately, it’s not the time to celebrate that… Anyway, it’s a good thing we captured the guy who had been throwing those spears in the previous battle. It would have been a bit uncomfortable if he was still out there,” she explained.

“We can’t expect support from Castle Rock, right?” I asked.

“Castle Rock is currently isolated. They’re not in battle. They’re like a princess who has been captured by the demon king. Despite knowing that this operation is dangerous, we have no choice but to do it because we can’t abandon the princess,” she answered.

“That’s a good example,” I commented.

“And this time…”

“Our tactical Kim Hyun-Sung,” I said.

“I won’t send him out just yet, and you should be on standby as well. If a path opens up or the situation becomes worse, you’ll be dispatched, but until then, you can take care of the sixth and seventh detachments. I’ll send over the coordinates,” she

requested.

“Okay, noona.”

The battle had just started, and the soldiers being depicted in the goddess’ mirror showed that they were currently trying to push each other back using swords and spears. From afar, it looked like the formation of each detachment was being maintained, but up close, the soldiers were mixing together.

‘This is fine.’

- You servants of the dirty demon! God will not forgive you!

- Crazy bastards. You guys are the demons!

- Stop the midgets from entering! Stop them!

- Who are you calling a midget?! You humans who sold your souls to demons!

The enemy forces were staying in line, but our goal was to break that line. I couldn’t help but nod in acknowledgment when I saw how the dwarves broke through their line. Their small but strong frame and high-quality armor made them extremely strong in a battle like this. My jaw even dropped when I saw how they were swinging their huge axes while breaking through the enemy line. There were battles a small-framed individual would be the best at because of their small frame, and those battles were usually humans against large monsters. They would either attack the monster from below to try and stagger it, or they would run around the slow-moving, enormous monster to exhaust it. The dwarves were experts in that kind of fight.

A path was slowly being opened, and I could see allied soldiers squeezing into the gap.

‘Nice!’

Meanwhile, large spirits were attacking with spirit magic. They weren’t dealing that much damage, but they were annoying, so they were good enough. Our force was like popcorn. A summoner maintained at least two to three summons, so it was enough to make up for the lack of power on the battlefield. Of course, we were lacking in some parts, but it was better to focus on the area we managed to prick a hole in

rather than spread our forces thin.

I connected to Kim Hyun-Sung's screen, and I felt like a driver who had just gotten inside a Lamborghini. I saw that he had been waiting for my voice.

- Can I head out?

"Yes. I'll send you the coordinates," I replied.

- Okay.

"Don't overdo it. Just provide support to the soldiers who are among—"

- Affirmative.

I had already done it once, so the task became a bit easier the second time around. Placing Kim Hyun-Sung at a strategic point where the allies were located was my goal, and since he had to clear the path with the other soldiers, it wasn't as chaotic as before. Perhaps it was because of that, but for some reason, I kept feeling disappointed. Unfortunately, there wasn't really anything I could do about it. I could still remember Kim Hyun-Sung's movement, and I was frustrated when I thought about it.

'Still… '

He was Kim Hyun-Sung.

Kim Ye-Ri, Jo Hye-Jin, and the other members who went with him had great synergy. The detachment was formed with high-quality soldiers, so I knew they were capable of a great performance, but I was still shocked by what they were displaying.

- Support requested! Request reinforcements! As soon as possible… Reinforcements!

- Request for a priest!

- Support is—*Cough!*

I knew better than anyone that we couldn't allow ourselves to get held back in situations like this, so I continued moving the troops and had them take care of the enemy troops in the middle of the battlefield. When I saw how they were pushing the

enemy troops back with Kim Hyun-Sung among them, I couldn't help but think that they were like soldiers of god.

'It should be fine to send him out now, right?'

Kim Hyun-Sung was kind of far from the enemy mage and priest detachments, so I couldn't decide if it was okay to send him there on his own.

'He could probably escape even if there are more of them, right?'

I was sure it was possible as long as I continued giving him accurate coordinates. I knew that it was dangerous to lust after profits in this kind of situation, but I trusted Kim Hyun-Sung's abilities, so after leaving the troops to the nearby dwarf detachment, I delivered another order to our lovely regressor. Dozens of magic holograms appeared before me, and although my head started hurting even before I could start, my fingers started moving. It seemed that I was craving the thrill and the same emotions I felt last time. Blood started rolling down my nose again, but I didn't have the luxury to worry about that.

"I'll send you the coordinates. You'll be doing this by yourself, but you won't be too far, Mr. Hyun-Sung."

- Affirmative.

Perhaps it was just me, but Kim Hyun-Sung sounded kind of excited. After seeing him jump into the enemy forces, I focused on the hologram, and it felt like I was getting sucked into it. This wasn't my first rodeo, but it was still a really interesting experience.

"Goal set. Take care of the mage detachment," I ordered.

- Affirmative.

The enemy troops kept restoring the line, so it was a bit difficult to find a path to the target. Fortunately, our soldiers were nearby, so I started seeing a path and pushed Kim Hyun-Sung toward it.

I was stupefied to see him bringing in results. I couldn't understand how he was able to move forward while swinging, stabbing, and turning around. I was sure even among the named players, no one could move like him.

The only reason between this battle and the previous one was that he had no time to think.

'He doesn't have the luxury to do that.'

I wasn't really happy because magic, swords, and spears were flying everywhere. He was moving forward, but I was sure he was concentrating a lot more than usual. Weapons and limbs continued flying into the air as I heard screams, but the talented swordsman didn't stop heading to his destination. He seemed a bit far from the main base, so when I quickly dispatched a detachment in the middle of the battlefield, I started waiting for results.

However, just as Kim Hyun-Sung appeared in front of the enemy mage detachment…

'Huh?'

Craaaaaack!

There was a loud sound, and an unknown wave of magic passed through the command center.

"Noona, just now…" I started.

"S-Shit! Oppa, is your goddess' mirror working?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

'Shit.'

The magic holograms in front of Lee Ji-Hye were shutting down one by one, and my mouth moved faster than my brain, which was still trying to understand what was going on.

"Mr. Hyun-Sung! Retreat!"

Fwoosh!

The magic hologram in front of me lost its light.

"That bastard…!" I cursed.

I finally discovered the demon summoner's goal.

CHAPTER 405
THE FINAL BATTLE (2)

"That bastard…!" I cursed.

I finally discovered the demon summoner's goal.

It was chaos in the chain of command.

In some ways, it felt like I was struck in the back of my head. I couldn't imagine the amount of confusion the field commanders and some of the troops on the battlefield were feeling. The communication that had always been maintained was cut off, so we couldn't inform them of the seriousness of the situation.

'We got too reliant on it.'

It was a way to move the entire army systematically as if it was one body, but that method was too one-sided because it was up to one command center to control that many troops. I didn't think this strength could be a weakness as well. Basically, the advantage we had was no longer there because the enemy already knew that we were controlling the troops through the goddess' mirror. He was smart, so he would naturally figure it out, but I could have never imagined that he would come up with a plan for it.

I realized this was his primary goal, and the previous battles were just a part of his strategic moves. I was curious about how he was able to completely shut down our command center. Other than magic, I had no idea know what method he used. He could have used an artifact created through magic engineering to nullify it, or he could have disconnected our magic that was systematically connected with each other.

The demon summoner Jin Cheong was an archmage, and there was a high chance that he investigated the previous battle. Many thoughts filled my head, but the important part was the process rather than the result and how we could take revenge rather than how they screwed us over. However, the desperate situation made me curse.

“Shit…”

“Don’t be so alarmed. We can maintain our chain of command even without the magic holograms. It won’t be like before, but on the base level, I’m sure it’s possible,” Lee Ji-Hye said.

“Is there no way to repair it?” I asked.

“The magic hologram is your specialty, oppa. You should’ve brought that son of yours. Well… I don’t think he’ll be much use even if he comes. I don't know when it’ll come back, but that is not what’s important right now. Calming down the troops is the priority. I was starting to get used to it as well, so this is kind of annoying. It really feels like—like I just got backstabbed,” she replied.

“…”

“I’ll be honest, oppa,” she continued.

“Okay.”

“There’s no guarantee that we’ll win. It feels like the enemy commanders are looking five steps ahead of me. It’ll be worth fighting them if we had the goddess’ mirror, but from this point on, it’s unreasonable. We can try to hold out as much as possible, but—”

“That’s not good news,” I interrupted her.

“I also want to confidently say that we can win, but I’m telling you this in case things fall apart because we have to consider the worst case scenario. We have to consider the possibility of us receiving major damage here,” she added.

An unknown sense of anxiety filled me as Lee Ji-Hye left the command center. It was a relief that she was prepared for something like this, but it was just a substitute. It wasn’t efficient, and we weren’t used to it.

Right now, the masked scum had the upper hand, and Lee Ji-Hye’s words also made me think that there was no way we could guarantee our victory at this rate. I thought that she was just overestimating them by saying they were five steps ahead of her, but since she knew him better than I did, I couldn't say she was wrong. Unlike me, who coincidentally met him, she played a simulation game that contained data about

Jin Cheong hundreds of times before. Without the goddess' mirror, she would be at a disadvantage against him. I walked outside and saw an anxious Lee Ji-Hye biting her nails with a frown.

The situation on the battlefield also proved that my assumption was correct.

'Shit.'

The enemy was moving strangely, and as if this was their chance, the enemy troops opened their arms as if they were trying to wrap all of the allied forces. I had no idea about the details of our military strategy, but I realized that our troops were currently in danger.

In addition, the named players on standby had to have jumped into the fray because I started hearing large explosions. The enemy forces surrounded the allied forces as if they were saying that they weren't going to miss this chance.

"I'll fix it now."

Lee Ji-Hye started controlling the troops through hand signals and flags, but it was difficult because the enemy troops were closing in on them. I was worried about our troops—yes, but I couldn't help but be curious about how Kim Hyun-Sung was doing. I focused mana on my eyes, but I couldn't see him. I was sure he wouldn't be defeated so easily think, but he was definitely in danger. The enemy troops weren't that strong, but if he had to fight named players on top of the ordinary troops, then he would be in danger. When I thought about how our lovely regressor was probably waiting for my order, I couldn't just stand by and watch.

'If Kim Hyun-Sung goes down… '

The story would end here. Setting the outcome of the war aside, the true issue was what would happen afterward. I already knew what would happen to the continent if the regressor of a transcendent being died.

'I can't let that happen.'

My plan to stay next to him and profit as much as I could while enjoying wealth and honor would get ruined if he died.

'I can't let him die."

I had to do something because I was the one who put him in that dangerous situation.

'Shit… Kim Hyun-Sung!'

I organized my thoughts.

"Noona."

"Yeah?"

"I'm going down there," I told her.

"Okay, do that… What? Are you crazy?" asked Lee Ji-Hye with her jaw on the ground.

"Prepare the reserve because I'm leaving right now," I ordered.

"What…"

"You said that there is no other way, and you're the only one who can control the troops right now. I don't really have anything I have to do, so this is the best I can do for now. They need a commander on the battlefield who can deliver orders to all the troops," I explained.

"That's not the problem. Can't you see the situation right now? I'm trying to fix it as much as I can, and the issue is to get out of their encirclement, but you actually want to crawl in there? You'll die. I'm sure of it," she said.

"If we lose the war, we're all going to die." I pointed out.

"…"

"I can protect myself, so don't worry too much about me, noona. I still have a long life to live as a parasite. If I die here after achieving so many things, I probably won't be able to rest in peace in the afterlife," I added.

"I know that, but—"

"I'm leaving," I said, interrupting her.

"…"

"…"

"Do what you want, you shitty idiot. I won't take responsibility if you die," she said.

"I won't die."

I was telling her the truth. If I died here, I would feel too aggrieved to rest in peace.

I bit my lips and started moving. When I left the command center, I saw the detachment protecting the rear. I was sure they were having pessimistic thoughts because they looked gloomy, and I was sure they were even more anxious after seeing the chaos in the command center. We somehow figured out the situation, but all they saw was chaos. I was sure they got even more worried when they saw me walking outside.

I glanced at them, I noticed Park Deok-Gu running up to me.

'Ah, right, he's a member of this detachment.'

"H-Hyung-nim!" Park Deok-Gu called out.

"…"

"What's going on? Did something happen?" he asked.

"I'll tell you the details later. We have a problem, Deok-Gu. Prepare the troops. We're going down now," I ordered.

"We're going… there?" he asked.

"Mr. Hyun-Sung, Miss Hye-Jin, and Ye-Ri have been isolated. I think they're okay for now, but they could get overrun by the enemy pretty soon," I replied.

"What happened—"

"It's a long story. Anyway, right now," I said, interrupting him.

"D-Do I have to go, too?" he asked.

'This pig… '

Naturally, I glanced at him. I expected him to tell me that he was going to come with me, but I could have never imagined that he would say that without any hesitation. He pretended like it wasn't affecting him, but he looked like he felt bad.

"I-I don't know if I'll be any help, but I should go down with you. Something could happen to you, and I'm sure you'll feel safer with me next to you. I told you before that I won't let anyone lay a finger on you," he said.

"Yeah, thanks."

"You don't have to thank me. I-I'm sure that others would have done the same thing. So what you're saying is that we're leaving to save our guild members, right?" Park Deok-Gu asked.

"That's the most important reason, but that's not the only reason," I answered.

'They need a commander on the field.'

We had a lot of things to do, but going down there and adapting to the situation was the top priority.

"O-Okay. Then, the troops…"

"I'm sure—no, Miss Ji-Hye will prepare that. We'll leave the minimum amount of troops in the rear. This detachment isn't big, but we're big enough to break through and join them…" I said.

"Got it. We should hurry, then," he said.

'At least he's quick when it comes to getting things done.'

While Park Deok-Gu was looking around, the detachment members approached me, and it didn't take me long to repair my equipment. I looked at the battlefield and saw explosions, which made my heart race. Still, I had to do something rather than waste time doing nothing.

I looked back and saw the soldiers nodding.

“Let’s go.”

“This is too sudden… Are you sure it’ll be okay?” Park Deok-Gu asked.

“It’ll be fine,” I answered.

“It won’t be a problem if that’s the case, but… I’m nervous. Maybe it’s just me, but I can’t remember the last time I fought beside you, hyung-nim,” he said.

“It’s not just you. It has been a while since we fought,” I told him.

“Standing here like me reminds me of the tutorial days… I’m just saying,” he added.

“No more chit-chat. Let’s go.”

Park Deok-Gu slammed his shield, and the soldiers had to have taken that as the signal because they started hitting their shields with their swords in response. Cold sweat started rolling down my face when I saw the soldiers fixing their helmets. I seriously thought I was doing something unnecessary here, but I was sure that this was more helpful than doing nothing.

I honestly couldn’t believe how I was keeping up with the soldiers who were running at full force toward the enemies. I wasn’t yelling with them, but I could finally understand why soldiers always yelled while charging. Arrows and spells kept falling down the sky, and I got even more nervous as we ran even faster. Actually, I got too nervous that I even forgot how I got here.

‘Shit.’

I started to become increasingly dizzy the closer I got to the enemy, and when the allied forces and the enemy forces collided with each other, a tremor ran through me, as well as through the other members.

Craaack!

“*Aaaahhh!*”

“Bastards! Die!”

“For the Goddess of Benigoa!”

The constant explosions and curses told me that I was officially on the battlefield.

'Shit!'

CHAPTER 406
THE FINAL BATTLE (3)

This wasn't my first fight.

It had been a long time since I fought on the front lines, but I had encountered many dangerous situations when the Blue Guild was still growing, and it was all because I was following Kim Hyun-Sung around.

As such, I had plenty of experience when it came to close combat. Of course, my experience was only limited to small skirmishes and dungeons. This was my first time in a large-scale fight, and I couldn't help but acknowledge that there was a stark difference between being here and watching the events unfold through a screen.

The battlefield was heated, and there were screams everywhere. The smell of dirt and blood had also combined to the extent that it was hard to distinguish them from each other.

'Maybe I shouldn't have come… '

I felt uncomfortable about entering the middle of the battlefield instead of staying in the back where it was safe, but I was already too far in to start regretting it. We collided with the enemy, and the vanguards started fighting with the allied forces.

Boom!

Crack!

"*Aaaahhh!*"

"Shit!"

"Close formation!"

"Bastard!"

"*Aaaahhhh!*"

Crack!

I couldn't even see what was happening. All I could see were the backs of the allied troops surrounded by armor and shields. If it weren't for my eyes, there was no way I would have understood what was going on. Unlike my dizzy mind, my eyes kept on collecting information from my surroundings.

The fallen soldiers became obstacles, which made it difficult to move around. It was to the point that I found it amazing how the allied soldiers kept on breaking through the enemy soldiers' encirclement.

I looked around carefully and saw Park Deok-Gu swinging his shield with a frown. I was reminded of our days in the tutorial dungeon when I saw him pushing an enemy soldier away from me. Back then, he blocked, and I stabbed the enemies for us. It wasn't the case right now, but I recalled how reliable he was back then, and although our method of fighting only really worked on tutorial monsters, it became pretty useful here now because of the limited space. The soldiers wielding spears in my place attacked behind the vanguards who were holding up their shields.

"Hyung-nim, are you following me?" Park Deok-Gu asked.

"Just look forward and stop worrying about me," I told him.

"O-Okay. By the way, which way are we supposed to go?" he asked.

"West, but we have to join up with the closest detachment first," I replied.

"Alright, but are you doing fine? I'll take you there no matter what," he said.

"Just focus, Deok-Gu," I said.

"All right! Stay close to me!" he yelled.

We were moving as fast as possible, but it felt like we were slow. I really felt like I throwing a bottle of Dragon Breath Potion, but I couldn't do that because it would hurt the allied troops. I couldn't do an alchemy summon as well because it would reveal my location. This detachment was formed at the last minute, and even though it was strong enough to break through the enemy line, it wasn't strong enough to

withstand focused attacks. If they discovered that I was a part of this detachment, then I was sure the enemy mages would start hurling their spells over here.

As such, our priority was to group up with the unit deeper into the enemy line. The reserve forces knew that, and it was why we were moving desperately.

“Break through them!”

“Don’t get pushed back! We’ll join the main force no matter what!”

“*Cough!*”

The detachment’s task was to send me to the main unit, and even though I saw soldiers falling one by one, all I could do was cast a short holy spell. I wanted to hold their hand or pull them into my arms, but I would get isolated if I focused my attention on them. I was a bastard with no conscience, but I couldn’t help but think about saving the soldiers dying for me.

‘Shit, shit!’

Crack!

Craaaaack!

“Stop them! Stop them!”

“Block the front! Spells are falling, so lift your shields up! I told you to lift your shield! What are you doing?! Lift your shield!” Park Deok-Gu ordered.

“Arrows! Arrows! What are the allied mages doing?!”

“Priest! Priest!”

An arrow lodged itself into the chest of the soldier who was calling for a priest next to me. An enemy soldier came running while holding a spear, but a large shield blocked their path. The allied soldiers filled up the opening that momentarily appeared.

I looked down and saw that the soldier who got struck by an arrow was running out of breath. An allied battle priest quickly checked up on his condition, but they really

couldn't do anything. The priest didn't even try to pour their holy power to extend their life because they knew that it was a stupid move to waste holy power on someone who had no chance of surviving.

'So this is why people are sensitive about wars… '

Someone once said the death of one man was a tragedy, but the death of a million was a statistic. The saying perfectly described this battlefield. I didn't have time to be sad about the death of an ally, and finding out who died and who survived was impossible while we were still in the middle of all this. I was sure the dead each had their own stories, but during a war, they were nothing more than dead allies.

No one would remember those who died.

"I'll remember you," I said.

"Th—*cough.* Thank… you."

I felt sad to see the soldier close his eyes quietly while coughing up blood and crying. I probably wouldn't remember the soldier as well, but it wasn't difficult to tell them that I would remember them. I nodded when the soldier closed his eyes comfortably, but I felt bitter about it as well.

We left the dead soldiers and continued heading toward the main unit, and as time went on, I was starting to get used to the sounds of the battlefield and was getting numb to how soldiers were dying left and right.

"Die!"

"*Aaaahhhh!*"

"Bastards! Bastards! Bastards!"

"Hang in there just a bit longer! You bastards! A little more! Don't lose! We just need to move a bit more!"

"Don't let them break through our formation!"

"Arrows! Arrows! Hold your shield up! Hold your shield up! Priest and mage! Protection! Protection!"

Arrows came flying down once again as large shields blocked my vision. Seeing that some of the arrows managed to break through the shields, the enemy had to have archers who could use magic, but the arrows didn't cause a lot of damage.

Park Deok-Gu and other allied soldiers held their shields up and moved forward while killing the enemy troops. It felt like we weren't far from our destination, but I suddenly heard a loud explosion and shrill screams.

'Shit.'

The allied soldiers were being lifted up into the air and thrown away. I couldn't see the details, but I knew what was happening.

'An enemy named player?'

Craaack!

Craaack!

"*Aaaahhh!*"

"Stop them! Stop… them. Don't—*Cough!*"

'Who is it?'

The face of the bastard who was charging from afar looked really familiar. He was the Russian Park Deok-Gu. Valentin Alexandro. He was one of the Five Tiger Generals whose job was Fighter of Ronaf. During the Laios incident, he was the same bastard who saved demon summoner Jin Cheong by sacrificing his right arm to Jung Ha-Yan's magic. I bit my lips when I saw him charging toward us.

'Did my cover get blown?'

I was sure it wasn't the case because I wasn't being specifically targeted. The enemy probably sent him here because they didn't want the reserve forces to reinforce our main force. I couldn't help but realize why players as strong as him were famous for being above the standards when I saw how he was pushing away the allied soldiers despite wearing heavy armor.

In addition, the way he roared while covered in blood made him look like a monster.

'Are we not getting any support from our allies?'

I was sure Lee Ji-Hye was trying to help us, but it was highly likely that she wouldn't be able to help in time because the allied forces were completely surrounded by the enemy. I was sure the allied forces that weren't that far from us were trying to break through after seeing the banner of the Three Nation Alliance, but…

'Will they get here on time?'

It would be nice if they did, but that crazy gorilla was here, so it would be an issue if they came here. In addition, I wasn't really sure if I could stop him.

'No, we can stop him.'

The soldiers with us should be able to handle him, and I could buy time through alchemy summon and the Dragon Breath Potion. I also have the Light Bomb Potion in case of an emergency, so we could fight this dumb bastard even for a moment, and I had a reliable shield beside me as well.

The problem was what would happen next…

Once they figured out my location, the pressure on our detachment would increase until we grouped up with the main forces. Unfortunately, we didn't have a choice because we couldn't expect reinforcements to arrive right away.

It was making me nervous, but the most reasonable thing to do was stop Valentin as fast as possible, then group up with the main forces. After making up my mind, I immediately started talking, and Park Deok-Gu looked at me.

"Get ready to fight, Deok-Gu."

"Can we win?" he asked.

"I'm sure we have a chance. Prepare yourself. We have to meet with them," I replied.

"…"

"…"

"Hyung-nim," he called out.

“What?”

“I’m not an idiot,” he said.

“What kind of bullshit are you saying this time?” I complained.

“I’m telling you that I know what’s going on right now. I know we’re currently in a dangerous situation, and I know you shouldn’t be here right now, hyung-nim. Actually, the enemy shouldn’t know that you’re here right now. Well, they basically mean the same thing,” he answered.

“Shut up and get ready, you pig! We’re in an urgent situation, so I don’t have time to listen to your jokes,” I told him.

“You go on ahead, hyung-nim. I’ll take care of this,” he suggested.

“Bullshit. Do you really think that we’re in some kind of cartoon? Don’t try to create a memorable scene. Just prepare for battle. I’m being serious here,” I warned him.

“I told you to go on ahead. I’ll take care of this. The remaining allied soldiers will take you to the main forces,” he repeated.

“What the hell are you…”

Park Deok-Gu grabbed my shoulder. He was huge, so I had to look up to him. It was strange how the way he looked overlapped with the Dark World Park Deok-Gu.

“I said I’m sorry for showing a shameful side. I think I finally know how you can stand so calmly on the battlefield, hyung-nim. Thank you for being considerate, for being with me, and just… thank you. I already know that I sound stupid, and I also know that you don’t really trust me…” Park Deok-Gu started.

“Don’t do something stupid!” I yelled.

“If you can do it—”

“Stop it with the bullshit! You don’t even know your place, you pig!” I screamed.

“I can do it better,” he finished.

Park Deok-Gu pushed me away, and the allied soldiers grabbed me against my will. The space between Park Deok-Gu and I quickly became filled with soldiers fighting each other.

It didn't take long for the Fighter of Ronaf to rush toward Park Deok-Gu, and I saw the pig placing his large shield on his back before grabbing Valentin’s arm.

Booom!

There was a loud noise, and the scene of them grabbing each other’s hands was the last scene I saw.

“You dumb pig!” I yelled.

CHAPTER 407
DIALUGIA, JULIENA (1)

“Let go of me, you bastards!” I ordered

“It’s dangerous!” a soldier said.

“I told you to let go of me, you scums!” I yelled again.

“Please don’t be like this, Father Lee Ki-Young. Please, please let it go,” they requested.

“Shit, shit!” I cursed.

“I’m sorry, but…”

“Shit! That dumb pig! That idiot! Who does he think he is?! That dumb pig!”I screamed.

I couldn’t contain my anger, shocking the soldiers around me. They looked as if they couldn’t believe what they were seeing. I could already imagine what they were thinking; they were definitely questioning if I was the Honorary Cardinal of the Sacred Democratic Country.

‘Shit.’

“Shi—”

I felt like I had completely ruined my image out of anger, and this was my first time showing this side of mine to other people. I could understand why the soldiers were shocked. After all, I had always been maintaining a magnanimous and kind demeanor.

Of course, I immediately realized my mistake. Usually, I would overreact whenever something like this happened, but I was not in the mood to do something like that. I took deep breaths and slowly calmed down. I was still angry, but I could recognize

that getting angry wouldn't get me anywhere.

The soldiers around me were helping me calm down as well.

'I have to stay calm.'

Rage wasn't a good emotion to possess in situations like this. Anger wouldn't get me anywhere. Anger wouldn't get me… anywhere.

'You pig… You pig! You dumb pig!'

However, I was still furious because I felt like Park Deok-Gu didn't have a chance against Valentin. Yes, he had grown a lot, and I knew his endurance stat was higher than the average person, but fighting was a different beast from tanking. It wouldn't matter if his opponent were just a moron, but the Fighter of Ronaf was one of the strongest named members of the Republic, so it would be rather strange if I weren't worried about him. No matter how much I thought about it, I couldn't find a way for Park Deok-Gu to win, so I could only think about how long he would last.

He had a strong body, so he wouldn't die so easily, but he wasn't immortal. As such, even if he kept his defenses up, it wouldn't change the fact that he was in danger. It wasn't just him. The allied forces caught near him were weaker than him, so they were receiving injuries from left and right. I was sure the flag bearer of the allied forces had already signaled to Lee Ji-Hye but could Park Deok-Gu endure Valentin's tracks until the reinforcements arrived? I should have noticed it when he started talking bullshit.

'Does he really think he's the protagonist of some movie?'

It was too late to go back, and it would be a more reasonable decision to join the main forces and form a reinforcement detachment out of the main forces. I wanted to run back to him right now, but it would be dumb to do that.

'Yeah, this is a reasonable decision.'

"A reasonable decision, a reasonable decision—Shit! Yeah, it's a reasonable decision. So as fast as possible…" I mumbled.

"Father Lee Ki-Young?" a soldier asked.

“As fast as possible,” I repeated.

“Father Lee Ki-Young.”

“Yes?” I replied.

“I-I’m sorry,” they apologized.

“It’s fine.”

“…”

“I’m the one… who should apologize. I showed a disgraceful side,” I apologized.

“It’s okay. That’s an absurd thing to say. You’re not disgraceful, and it’s completely… understandable,” they said.

“Thank you. Let’s hurry and join the main forces as soon as possible,” I suggested.

“Understood.”

“I’ll lead the path,” I told them.

“Are you…”

“No, we won’t be going back. I think it’s best if we join the main forces and break through. The command center probably knows what’s going on here, so I’m sure they’ll do something to help us,” I answered.

“Alright.”

The soldier with an unknown name slowly nodded. I was worried about them having bad thoughts about me, but they seemed to have gotten even more loyal to me. I had no idea why, but I was glad that there weren’t any other problems.

Naturally, I nodded and started walking. The battle was still ongoing. We were slowly getting closer to the main forces, but I could feel that the entire battlefield was moving as well, so I had to find the right path. I was sure the masked scum and Lee Ji-Hye were fighting with their minds above us, and they were probably the reason why the battlefield was changing in real time.

'That's a relief.'

The main forces were still standing. I was sure they were still trying to find a way out or a way to attack the enemy's weak point. The soldiers inside were busy fighting, but if I could watch them from above, I was certain that it would be been an interesting sight.

'It's good for that pig.'

Park Deok-Gu could group up with another detachment as long as he didn't get himself isolated.

When I saw the allied forces getting closer, I started to feel more and more impatient. The detachment in front of us had to have noticed us because they started heading toward us. The enemy forces were resisting hard, but we were able to break through them. During this, the number of soldiers trying to send me to the main unit started decreasing one by one—no, it was more like they were dying one by one.

"Magic! It's magic! Cast shield magic!"

"Shield! Shield!"

A large fireball fell.

Craaack!

Some of the soldiers holding up their shields caught fire…

"*Aaaahhh!!*"

It wasn't the end. Fireballs kept on falling, injuring the soldiers next to me. The soldiers around me were getting injured, but my goal remained the same. I had to pass by the allies and enemies to keep moving forward.

All of a sudden, an impact ran through the allied forces. However, it wasn't an attack. The nearest detachment, the enemy that was fighting them, and the reinforcements crashed into each other. The enemy detachment got pinched, but the nearest allied detachment was in a desperate situation, so they fought with more vigor the moment they clapped their eyes at the reinforcements.

“Push them back a bit more! You bastards! Push them back! We’ve come here to support you! Reinforcements!”

‘There aren’t that many of you guys to call yourselves reinforcement.”

However, it was enough to change the situation. Of course, I was helping them as well, and even though I could only inflict a bit of damage with my alchemy magic, it was better than nothing. I knew I had to save my mana, but the soldiers really didn’t have any room to breathe because the battle was dragging on. The ferocity of the battlefield made it extremely chaotic.

I looked around and noticed enemy detachments heading toward me, and I was so frustrated by the situation that I barely managed to suppress the profanity that was about to come out of my mouth. The masked scum’s side had to have sent reinforcements as well, which made me frown. Since he was the type of that person who enjoyed reaping even the smallest profits, I was sure he wouldn’t just sit by and watch our reinforcements take down his soldiers. He was obviously using the reinforcements to capture the detachment in front of him.

For us, it was unavoidable. No, we could actually avoid a confrontation, but…

‘We can’t do that.’

Finding a new path was impossible, and breaking through to join the main forces before us would be a lot faster. I didn’t know exactly which way the soldiers were moving and what the current situation was like because I could only think about one thing.

‘How far are we from the main forces?’

If we quickly broke through them, then I was sure that we would arrive on time.

“Prepare for battle.”

“Prepare for battle! Prepare for battle!”

The soldiers were prepared because we were in the middle of the battlefield. I told them to prepare for the fresh batch of soldiers heading toward the allied reinforcements and allied forces.

'It'll be difficult, but… '

We had no choice.

I took a deep breath as screams echoed everywhere. I wasn't really comfortable being in the middle of a bloody battlefield, so I had no choice but to close my mouth and hold my hands together. I continued hearing the sound of metal clashing against metal and the detachments in the area grouped up with the reinforcements.

I couldn't remember their name, but the person responsible for the enemy soldiers looked familiar. They looked as if they had come back alive and were part of the detachment that split from the main forces. Actually, it was more like they got separated from their main forces because of our allied forces. To reap small profits, they skinned our soldiers and caused a lot of damage. The soldiers who couldn't hold out were hunted and skinned. The bastard's tactic was detailed and perverted to the point that it gave me goosebumps. He looked exactly the same as the time we played the game together.

'We're getting pushed back.'

Obviously, I realized that Lee Ji-Hye was going through a lot. If things were going well, the allied forces with us wouldn't have fallen out of line and gotten hunted like that. It didn't seem like they were getting beaten to death, but they were still in pain.

'This is bad.'

Park Deok-Gu and Valentin were fighting right now, while Kim Hyun-Sung got isolated, so I had no idea where he was. It was the same for Kim Ye-Ri and Jo Hye-Jin's detachment. Even worse, the main forces were suffering more and more damage as time went on. The situation looked fine right now, but a few hours later, I was sure we would see a big difference in the number of our soldiers compared to them. As such, I had to turn the tables somehow. Even the smallest opening was fine because as long as there was an opening, we could break through it.

'Should I use the Light Bomb potion?'

No. It had a huge range, but it wasn't that big. In addition, I didn't really bring it along with me just to use it on a few soldiers.

'Should I aggro them?'

It wasn't a bad idea to have someone cause a commotion. It didn't take long for me to organize my thoughts, and when I was about to give orders to the detachment that was fighting the enemy troops near me, an enemy suddenly appeared next to me.

'An assassin?'

I had no idea how they got so close to me, but my current objective was to survive. I was still confused, but I moved backward and raised my hands. Unfortunately, the enemy's dagger reached my neck faster than I could channel my spell.

A soldier next to me reacted, and he thrust his spear at the assassin. Sadly, the assassin was too good for them to get hit by a mere spear thrust.

'Shit!'

I bit my lips, and a sword fell from the sky, piercing the assassin's head.

"J-Juliena?"

I looked up and cheered when I saw it.

"*Roaaar!*"

It had been quite a while since I last saw her, but I finally saw my wife again.

CHAPTER 408
DIALUGIA, JULIENA (2)

Crack! Craaack!

Some looked up as if they couldn't believe their eyes, some had to pick their jaws up from the ground, while some even rubbed their eyes to check whether they were hallucinating or not. I was sure they had heard by now that I had a dragon, but there was a difference between seeing and hearing. It was especially the case for the natives of this continent.

I could understand their reaction because Dialugia was so big they had to look all the way up just to clap their eyes at her entire body. Dialugia's large eyes, large fangs, and claws instilled fear into the enemy soldiers' hearts. Her glossy black scales looked harder than any armor out there, and I was pretty sure it was the case. After all, her endurance was high enough that she could ignore attacks, and her base magic resistance was incredibly high as well.

I felt proud. Of course, they easily focus me down, but Dialugia was the best and the most reliable ally when it came to a battlefield like this.

"I…"

"Attack! Attack! Use your magic!"

"It's a dragon! A dragon!"

"Attack its wings! Wings! If we do as we were told, we can take it down!"

"Task force location confirmed! Dragon task force location!"

The battlefield was plunged into chaos, but our lovely dragon commander seemed like she couldn't hear any of the humans' screams. She swung her large tail, and the enemy soldiers were flung into the sky. It was also ridiculous how easily she swept the shield-wielding soldiers away.

Craaackle!

"*Huh?*"

Boooom!

It felt like mana was being sucked into a vacuum. After taking a deep breath, Dialugia unleashed her Breath. She was starting to get pushed back by her own skill as a large shied protected the place where her Breath landed. However, the shield started cracking not long after. Her Breath went through the cracks and injured the enemy soldiers. She was unleashing her Breath in a way that made her seem like she was venting out her frustration about how she was the only one raising our daughter. As expected, her Breath was powerful enough for me to piss my pants at the sight of it.

I had no idea how much strength she used, but her strength made me feel relieved.

'I love you, wifey!'

I unknowingly started cheering for her, and even though I wanted to perform a masked dance, I felt sad about not being able to do that. If it weren't for the people around us, I would have already run up to her leg and started kissing her. Dialugia was doing that much damage to the enemy soldiers,

Meanwhile, someone else was doing her job as well, even though the method was a bit different from Dialugia.

The ego sword that could move on its own flew through the narrow and enclosed battlefield and pierced through the ordinary soldiers' throats. I was sure this wouldn't work on skilled soldiers, but many soldiers couldn't handle her. Everyone was amazed at how a single sword was moving around so fast and agile like a mosquito.

'This is why people want an ego sword!'

I wouldn't deny that I was the type of person who was strong against the weak but weak against the strong. Still, I could have never imagined that my damaging abilities would match my personality.

'People Slaughterer!'

The nickname sounded kind of bad for me to say it myself, but there wasn't a word that described my damaging abilities better than that. Obviously, I smiled brightly, and that was when I heard a voice in my head.

- Did I get here on time?

- Gedric! My Gedric!

- Honey, I asked you if I arrived here on time!

- My Gedric! Where have you been all this time?! How come all this time…

- It's been a while. What have you been doing all this time… Aren't you curious about how Max and Luria have been doing? It's really difficult to even see your face recently. Have you already recovered? You had to have been in a lot of pain. Yes, I'm sure of it.

- Gedric! Gedric!

- Are you listening to me? Say something if you can hear me!

- Gedriiiic!

The way they talked to me made me feel dizzy, but I was actually happy. Honestly, this was the first time I felt happy about hearing Dialugia's nagging and Juliena crying out for Gedric. It seemed like they couldn't hear each other because they were just saying what they wanted to say. My ears started ringing, but I was ready to listen to any nagging or crazy words. Of course, I decided to listen to Dialugia first.

"No, you got here just in time, Dialugia. How's our Smartie doing?"

- She's doing fine. I don't know where she heard the news that you were sick, but I suffered a lot trying to stop her from following you. It was really difficult.

"*It would've been fine if you told her that it wasn't anything serious."*

- How was I supposed to explain to her how her father hasn't been calling home recently? Of course, I understand that you have your own life and job to do, but… please refrain from neglecting your family because of useless wars like this. Max is very sad as well. Once this war is over, please make sure you spend a lot of time with

Luria.

"Of course. I'll definitely do that."

- I don't understand why humans waste time like this every time…

"I'm sure you know, but we didn't start this war. They started this war. I'm doing this to protect our precious place of life, so I believe you'll understand my situation, Dialugia. If we just leave them be, their soldiers will march to Lindel, where our precious nest is located, what do you think is worse than that? While you were protecting our family from the inside, you can think of it as me protecting our family from the outside."

-…

"Ahem, ahem."

- You don't really lose a single argument. You're just… *Whew*…

"I mean, I'm telling the truth."

Dialugia seemed frustrated as she vented once again, but I was sure she couldn't retort my words because I could see from the way she was moving her tail that she was calming down.

"More than that…"

- You don't have to worry about that human named Park Deok-Gu. On the way here, I dropped off the person who could help.

"Who?"

- The red-headed human. The person named Cha Hee-Ra.

"Y-Yolo…"

- What does yolo mean?

I knew that someone had to help Park Deok-Gu, but when I heard that Cha Hee-Ra was the one helping him, I felt like a huge weight was lifted from my shoulders, which made me smile brightly.

I knew that with Cha Hee-Ra there, there was no way they wouldn't be able to crush the Russian Park Deok-Gu.

"It's nothing. Please prepare to move for now. It'll be dangerous if we stay here, and it'll be great if you could fly up and keep watch of the battle. Actually… I think it's best if we head to the main forces together."

- Okay.

The conversation was formal and stiff for it to be a conversation between a married couple who had just met after a long time, but I thought that it wasn't so bad. I couldn't really concentrate on the conversation because I had to keep moving, and Juliena continued talking to me, which made it even more difficult. Even now, she kept calling for Gedric, so I had no choice but to change the channel and start talking to Juliena because she was already screaming for Gedric.

- Gedric! My voice! Can't you hear my voice? Gedric! Gedric! Gedriiiiiic! Gedriiiic!

After taking a deep breath, I replied. I wasn't ready to meet Juliena yet, but the basic story had long been stored in my head.

"Ahh, my Juliena. How did you come here?"

- Gedric! My voice has reached you! Gedric! My everything. My love. My everything! What have you been doing all this time? Gedric! My Gedric!

"It's because of them that I haven't been able to see you. Those dirty demons locked me up, tortured me, and threatened me. You have no idea how much I've missed you. My Juliena!"

- *Ah…*

"These demons are trying to turn this continent into a demon's nest."

The only reason I had been avoiding Juliena was because of how she sucked my mana out last time. The excuse I gave wasn't perfect, but it was a decent excuse. Of course, I had to give more information. I thought perhaps it would be a good idea to speak words of love, but based on her reaction, I didn't think that an explanation was necessary.

- Those… dirty bastards. Those dirty! How dare those dirty bastards!

"…"

- I-I'll tear them to pieces. I'll tear you all to pieces!

"What's going on?"

- Those scums! H-how dare they?!

A dark, ominous energy started appearing around Juliena. The ominous energy coalesced to form a faint figure.

'That crazy… '

[The Legendary weapon, the Cursed Sword Juliena's uncontrollable rage has forcefully awakened her.]

"What does that mean…"

[Juliena's seal has been temporarily lifted, and she will now materialize. - Duration: 1 Hour]

"What?"

- You bastards, you bastards, you bastards! How dare you! How dare you! How dare you try to get in the way of Gedric and me? How dare youuu!

"…"

'She's crazy…!'

My jaw dropped at the sight. I looked at Juliena after seeing the system messages, and I saw that she was actually materializing. She looked exactly like the time we saw her at the Cursed Shrine. Her hair was messy, and she didn't have eyes.

The grotesque-looking crazy woman stood up while wielding her sword, but she seemed unaware of the fact that she had a body.

Seeing her swinging her sword while screaming made it seem like she was difficult to control, and she seemed stronger than the time we saw her at the Cursed Shrine. One could easily deduce her rank as a Legendary weapon just by looking at her once.

- How dare youuuuu! How dare you! My Gedric… You locked up my Gedric! Again, again! You threat—did you rape him? All of you?! Did all of you did?!

I had never told her that I got sexually assaulted.

- Know your place! I-I'll curse you! Curse! I'll curse you!! I'll curse all of you!! You'll be in pain even in the afterlife. Forever! You'll forever be in pain!

I got scared at Juliena's grotesque appearance, but the soldiers were even more shocked than me. In addition to cursing them, she even summoned black tentacles all over the place to and ripped the nearby enemies apart.

The way she kept on screaming made her seem like a woman who had sold her soul to a demon.

'I should pretend like she isn't here.'

It was the right thing to do.

CHAPTER 409
DIALUGIA AND JULIENA (3)

I told myself desperately to ignore her

'I knew she was crazy, but… '

As the battle went on, I realized that Juliena was crazier than I thought, but from her point of view, I could see why she was so angry. Her reunion with her lover only lasted for a moment when an unknown demon kidnapped and locked her lover up. Seeing that the two already had a sad ending, it made sense for her to be so angry. My heart broke when I heard their sad story, but I still had to get away from here because of her eerie behavior.

- Curse! I'll curse you! Curse! I'll drag your corpses all over the continent. You'll experience the most miserable death and ending so that you'll feel suffer even in the afterlife, you scum! You dirty scums! I'll step on your corpses and make sure everyone related to all of you will fall into the fiery pits of hell and be in pain forever!

The black smoke immediately enveloped the enemy soldiers. They kept casting a purification spell, but controlling Juliena's curse with holy power was impossible. Juliena's skill wouldn't affect the target that quickly, but Juliena was still influential on the battlefield.

"Stay away! Don't come any closer! Shit! Don't come closer!"

"*Aaaahhhh!*"

"Stop her! Don't let her come any closer! Mother, mother!"

"S-Save me… Run! Run away! We'll all die! We're all going to die!"

The way Juliena swung her sword while opening her mouth made her look like a crazy woman, and the sight was enough to make the soldiers either scream dialogue that made me feel good or make them the most loving sons ever.

“Don't come!”

- You deserve the pain! *Kyahaha!* You’re like bugs! You wicked humans! Die! Die! Die! Dieee!

The tentacles that spread out from her in all directions easily pierced the enemy soldiers’ armor. However, those who got stabbed by the tentacles didn’t die outright. When I saw how they were making all kinds of noises while trembling, I couldn’t help but think that they were being influenced by a curse. Juliena’s tentacles mutilated a few of the enemy soldiers’ corpses, and she even started hitting them with the hilt of her sword. As the battle progressed, the enemy soldiers afflicted with her curse started screaming amidst the chaos. Fear was natural in humans, and even I didn’t want to be here right now.

As such, I immediately started walking away. The allied soldiers looked at Juliena with disgust, and I felt bad, so I had no choice but to say something.

“I-it’s dangerous. I-It seems like the seal I had been suppressing was broken.”

“*Ah*…”

Of course, it was bullshit, but I had to insist. I had no idea just who am I talking with, but I felt relieved to see the soldiers nodding.

‘This is why your usual demeanor is important.’

“I-I see, Father Lee Ki-Young. Then, that’s…”

“I think it’s best if you follow the road and join the main forces for now,” I suggested.

“What about you…?” they asked.

“I’ll head there first,” I replied.

“How—*Ah*, I see. Okay.”

They widened their eyes for a moment, but they nodded when they saw Dialugia.

I started walking as well, and the nearby soldiers protecting me were nervous that something would happen, but this was currently the safest place because the enemy

soldiers were focused on Juliena. My desire to fight alongside Juliena was strong since she was fighting by herself, but I couldn't do that. Of course, it definitely wasn't because I didn't want to be in the same space as her. I just had my own business to handle, so this was beyond my control.

- Gedric! Gedriiiiiic!

Juliena had to have realized that I was moving away because I heard a hair-raising sound. Her voice sounded like the noise a blackboard would give if you scratched it. She seemed like she wanted to hurry up and come to me, but the enemies around her were holding her back. It seemed that the Juliena raid was about to start.

- Gedric! How dare you! All of you! My Gedric! Move this instant! You're lower than bugs!

"Surround her!"

"Be careful not to get influenced by her curse. Vanguards, protect the front!"

"Don't get wounded by her sword! Keep your distance and attack her from a distance. Maintain the purification magic!"

The strange fight that was taking place in the center of the battlefield could be a spectacle for some people.

- Move! Move already!

"*Aaaahhh!*"

"Shit!"

- The curse will fall upon you! The curse! Everyone who gets in between Gedric and me will get cursed and die a miserable death!

"*Cough!*"

- *Ahh!* Gedric! Don't worry! My Gedric! Wait for me just a little longer! Your small baby bird will find you soon!

With how she looked, there was no way she was a small baby bird.

Cold sweat started rolling down, but I did my best to look away. When I ran as fast as I could to get away from that unknown creature, I saw Dialugia lowering her head so that I could ride her.

"…"

- Okay, okay, I got it.

I grabbed Dialugia's horn tightly, and Dialugia flew upward as the soldiers below us started to get smaller and smaller. They looked touched. I wasn't sure if this was the right description, but the allied soldiers were looking at me as if I was the protagonist of a fairy tale.

I nodded lightly and expressed my respect to them using the knight's way. I felt like I was receiving a memorial of the heroes, similar to scenes in history books. Being with a dragon was enough to be the subject of public envy, but the individual chosen by the gods was actually riding a dragon.

Seeing them blindly looking at me and expecting me to take care of everything was burdensome, but from their point of view, it was understandable for them to look at me that way. I couldn't help but think that it was time for me to get used to those gazes.

"I leave it up to you, Father Lee Ki-Young."

"Thank you, everyone."

After the short goodbye, Dialugia flew toward the center of the battlefield, where arrows and spells incessantly rained down on the soldiers below. After acting kind of cool, I tapped Dialugia's horn and spoke. I had to maintain my image, after all.

"Let's go, Dialugia."

- I'm not used to the sky.

"I'm sure it's better than being on land because a task unit assigned to fight you is probably heading this way, so there's no reason for us to stay. And flap your wings once before flying and howl loudly so that everyone will look at you."

- I'm not some attraction for people to look at. Even in this kind of situation, you—

“I’m not telling you to act like a clown, and I have no intention of putting on a show. This is to boost their morale. You saw it yourself during the holy democratic revolution. You have already become a symbol. Just imagine that you’re showing your beauty to them by striking a pose or something.”

- I’m not really into it, but…

“This battle will go down in history, and I’m sure the people will talk about you and me. As the human who has been chosen by a dragon. We’ll appear in the history book Dialuria will eventually read. The Alchemist of Light and his wife resisted the demon army! Don’t you think you should maintain the balance since you’re one of the few dragons remaining on this continent?”

- Are they really the demon army?

“Of course, and who cares if they’re not the demon army? History will side with the victors. Of course, that doesn’t mean I’m denying the fact that they’re an army of darkness. Their leader is definitely the one who summoned the demon lord in Laios. Demon Summoner Jin Cheong. He’s the one who caused all of this.”

-…

“I’m telling the truth. Now, let’s hurry and become exemplary parents whom Smartie will respect. Our Dialuria will be respected by humans as well. I’m sure of it.”

-…

I didn’t hear Dialugia’s answer, but it was easy to deduce her answer. The way she lifted her head and roared out loud would make anyone raise their thumbs, and regardless of whose side they were on, the soldiers looked at Dialugia and me. After flying into the sky as if she was jumping, many spells started flying up to hit her, but Dialugia wasn’t slow enough to get hit by those attacks. I was sure that some of those spells were dangerous, but seeing her dodge the attacks by moving left and right made her look like the god of aerial combat.

I was riding her, so it felt like I was in a 4DX cinema. The wind blowing into my face made it difficult for me to breathe, so when I talked to her with my mind to tell her to slow down, I heard her speak.

“You must avoid the blue things. I’m sure those spells were created just for you. They

look like some sort of binding magic, so you'll fall if one of those managed to hit you."

- I don't know much, but that makes sense if we consider the amount of mana they used for those spells.

'It's just a glorified basic binding magic…"

- I'm sure I'll be able to resist it, then. By the way, hold on tight so you won't fall.

There were large blue translucent ropes flying after Dialugia. In response, I hurled a Dragon Breath Potion at the blue ropes, and they exploded with a loud noise. However, there was a spell that kept on chasing after her, and it looked difficult to dodge as well.

I was sure that Dialugia thought the same because she directly interrupted the spells with huge amounts of mana in them as well as the spells she couldn't dodge. She was just dodging, but I was sure she was starting to annoy the enemy leaders.

We weren't damaging them directly, but I was sure we were doing some kind of damage because they had to create a task force as well as do some research on spells just to counter Dialugia.

'I wonder where our Hyun-Sung is… '

I continued looking for him, but I couldn't see him. Obviously, it wouldn't be easy to find him because I was riding Dialugia, who was flying downward at breakneck speeds. I tried looking for him whenever we were in a lull in mid-air, but the battlefield was huge, so I couldn't check every single corner.

However, I was relieved when I couldn't see the mage detachment we had been targeting earlier, and since they were gone. It seemed like I had been worried for nothing.

'I'm sure he's safe.'

If Kim Hyun-Sung could see us, I was sure he was moving toward the main unit, and since the allied forces finally had some room to breathe, I was sure that he would be able to retreat.

All of a sudden, I could feel a tremendous amount of mana from above—no, it was

more like immense pressure was boring down on us.

'What's that?'

There was a large meteor falling from the sky.

"Crazy…"

The large meteor was falling toward our main forces clumped together in the middle of the battlefield.

"It sure is awesome. Seriously, Jin Cheong. You scummy bastard…!"

CHAPTER 410
JOY TO THE WORLD. LIGHT KI-YOUNG HAS DESCENDED (1)

A cleverly crafted trap. I didn't know how much of Castle Rock they were trying to conquer, but I couldn't help but curse. Of course, I knew this wasn't the best situation for the enemy either, and I was sure they were in a hurry as well. I was sure he had wanted to cast the spell after sending as many troops as possible, but the plan was unfortunately ruined by unexpected variables. If I were Jin Cheong, I would have cast the spell after the stamina of the enemy forces was close to rock bottom.

This wasn't the right time to cast that spell because the main unit was currently being surrounded by enemy forces, and the spell would cause a lot of damage to the allied forces as well. Once the spell was cast, the war could basically be considered over.

Of course, I wasn't the only one who knew that.

I heard a commotion beneath me, and not long after, I felt a large wave of magic. I was sure the allies were creating a shield magic circle to block the enemy's spell, but it was doubtful if a spell cast at the last minute could even block such a huge meteor.

At the same time, I finally realized why the enemy stayed in Castle Rock.

'Is it because they were preparing all this?'

I wasn't certain, but it was likely. They weren't simply using Castle Rock as bait. Time and manpower were necessary to cast that kind of spell, so they had to have been prepared to cast the spell from the beginning—no, the moment I sent that message. I was sure the command center had a device that could cast and maintain that spell.

They limited the range so that their allied forces wouldn't suffer that much damage, and the spell was pretty accurate as well, as long as there were coordinates to guide it. If we considered the possibility of errors coming up, then the spell was probably more complicated than the spell that fell on Laios.

I already knew the Republic had a lot of competent mages, but the ones who helped them with this spell were probably…

'The Magic Kingdom.'

It was painfully obvious that it was the case. I also became sure that the spell was the reason behind Jin Cheong's incessant messages about paying us back in our coin for what happened in Laois. I looked up at the meteor and used Mind's Eye.

[Semi-Mythic Spell]

[Meteor]

'Can we block it?'

I did have my Light Bomb Potion, but I didn't think that a single Light Bomb Potion could stop that meteor in its tracks.

We could probably stop it if we were to chip away at the mana surrounding the meteor, then send in a Light Bomb Potion to intercept it. However, there wasn't really any guarantee that it would succeed, but…

- That's…

"As close as possible."

But I had no choice but to do my best because I would lose everything I had achieved so far if that meteor crashed. While Dialugia was hesitating, a large shield magic circle started forming above the heads of the allied forces.

Booooooooooooooooooom!

A loud explosion reverberated. The shield magic that the main unit created was blocking the meteor, and although I had some expectations for a moment, all it did was delay the spell. The way it continued falling while pushing away the clouds was surreal. Not long after, I heard a loud *crack*, and the large shield shattered completely.

"Breath! Breath!" I yelled.

- I don't know if it'll be effective.

"It's better than doing nothing," I said.

Naturally, I thought it would be best to hit it with something. A large light shot out from Dialugia's mouth. She had taken a deep breath after hearing my request. I leaned back as Dialugia shot her Breath toward the meteor. It was a scene out of the myths, but I wasn't really happy when I saw it.

"Shit. It's not enough…" I commented.

- I think it's best if we dodge it. I'm sure we'll be pulled in if we get any closer.

"No, let's go up. We can stop it."

- Are you being serious?

"I'm not certain, but I do have a way."

-…

"Just fly up. Please…! You don't trust me at all."

- That's because you're not exactly a trustworthy person. I never had any trust in you, and I don't think I'll ever trust you.

Contrary to her words, Dialugia flew closer to the meteor, and during all this, the allied forces cast another shield magic, and the meteor struck another semi-transparent shield. I had some expectations, but the second one broke faster than the first one.

What the allied forces were doing was basically chipping away at the mana surrounding the spell, so the shields they had cast so far weren't really useless. Unfortunately, shield magic would never be able to stop that meteor.

I looked at my right arm and saw the small shield Kim Hyun-Sung gave me.

[Incomplete Aegis' Shield - Legendary Rank]

[The shield the god of the sky gave to the goddess of war. The shield is incomplete

and fragmented. Perhaps it is because of the mana contained in the shield, but the shield is still functioning despite being just a fragment of a complete shield. Greatly increases basic magic resistance. Consume mana to summon the Incomplete Aegis' Shield for a short time. The Incomplete Aegis' Shield will always block critical attacks.]

'Will this work?'

Apparently, the shield would always block critical attacks, but it was highly likely that it would only be able to block critical attacks below Legendary. Semi-Mythic spells were probably too much for it to handle.

When I thought about what happened in the Rift Museum, I couldn't help but doubt if a small shield like this could actually stop a Semi-Mythic meteor.

'It's worth trying… '

"Use Breath one more time."

- This is the last time.

"It doesn't matter. We need to stop that thing first, and because this will be the last time, I want you to use all of your mana."

- I was going to do that anyway.

Dialugia used Dragon's Breath once more, and while her Breath was stalling the meteor, another shield magic circle manifested in the air. I wasn't sure what was happening on the ground, but I was sure the allied mages were screaming, and some of them might even be coughing up blood like Jung Ha-Yan in Laios. I was sure it was the same for the mages who contributed to casting the meteor. It didn't matter what would happen after all this because those mages would definitely be unable to cast spells for a while.

'They're probably at their limits… '

I didn't have the luxury to look around, but I was curious about their condition.

- Is this really okay? Really? Do you have a plan?

The moment the third shield magic cast by the allied forces shattered, I ignored Dialugia and immediately shouted, “Aegis!”

A dazzling light was unleashed from the tiny shield, and it created a large shield in front of me. The effect was surprisingly grand, but I wasn’t sure if it could even last long against the meteor.

I raised the shield up, but it quickly cracked and shattered.

“Aegis! Aegis! Aegis!”

‘Always block critical attacks, my ass!’

The shield had consumed a tremendous amount of mana, and if I bought this item from someone else, then I would definitely return it to them.

- Any more and I’ll…!

“I got it, so move back! Back! Back away! Now!”

Craaaack! Craaaaaaack!

The large shield finally broke, and the heat that the meteor was generating made me feel like I was burning. Among the entire human race, I was sure that I was the only person who bravely tried to stop a meteor. Obviously, I was worried that I was going to die. Meanwhile, another shield from the allied forces covered the sky. It managed to stop the meteor for a moment before it continued falling to the ground.

‘I should probably continue chipping away at the mana powering it up.’

I thought it was a good idea, but there was no way I could do that. In the end, I retrieved two potions from my pockets and hurled them at the meteor.

“You tenacious bastard! Have a taste of the power of light! You scum!”

It would be nice if I could stop the meteor with just two potions, but I wasn’t sure if it would be enough.

Fwooooooooosh!

However, when a dazzling light engulfed my surroundings, I noticed that the light was gnawing the meteor away.

'That's right! Shit! That's it! Keep going! You can do it!'

Whooooooooosh!

The potion was definitely effective because it enveloped a large part of the meteor before turning the entire meteor into a meteor of light. I wanted to stand up and dance, but I was having a difficult time moving while riding Dialugia, so all I could do was cheer at the fact that my assumption was correct.

However, a sudden astonishing change occurred in the meteor.

"*Huh?*"

The meteor split in half.

Booooooooooom!

The light completely enveloped one side, but it didn't do that for the other side; it was ridiculous how that side continued falling toward the allied forces.

The other half of the meteor was completely covered in light, while the other half remained untouched as it kept on falling toward the allied forces.

"Dialugia! Breath! Breath! Breath!"

- I-I can't… And my balance…! I'm falling! I'm falling!

"Shit! Shit!" I started cursing with a frown.

Fortunately, the untouched half of the meteor was split in half, and I could easily deduce the person who did that because he was the only one capable of such a feat.

'Hyun-Sung! Shit! I knew you'd come through!'

However, I didn't have the luxury to watch what was going to happen afterward because the Light Bomb Potion's explosion sent a shockwave that broke Dialugia's balance, sending her plummeting to the ground.

I grabbed onto her horns as strongly as I could, but I felt like I would lose my grip at any moment.

“Shit!”

- Hold on…!

Booooom!

“*Cough! Cough! Cough!* Diaugia! Dialugia! Are you alright?”

- I can bear it. Are you…

“I’m okay.”

‘What happened to the meteor?’

Strangely enough, the surroundings were quiet—no, the battlefield itself was quiet. Dialugia and I had fallen to the ground, and I could see soldiers staring at us in disbelief. I was sure that the shock rendered them speechless. I could totally understand their reaction because even I couldn’t believe that we managed to stop that meteor.

About half of what happened in Laois was fabricated, but a similar incident happened here on the battlefield, and we would also emerge victorious here. The specks of dust falling from the sky were glimmering, and they covered the entire army.

If I were a devout believer, then the sight would have been enough for me to kneel right there and then while shouting hallelujah.

“Benigoa’s comeback… It’s Benigoa’s comeback…!”

“It’s the comeback of the Goddess of Benigoa!”

‘The atmosphere isn’t so bad.’

I wasn’t expecting their reactions at all, but they reacted better than I thought.

‘It’s effective.’

The specks of dust falling from the sky created the perfect veil of light. The specks of dust created a curtain made out of light, and I was riding a dragon in the middle of all this. Even I couldn't help but think that it was such a perfect scene. My legs were trembling after using mana beyond my limits, but my instincts were telling me to say something, so I cast voice amplification magic and spoke.

- Stop fighting! My dear Republicans!

Adrenaline coursed through my veins.

- Lower your weapons!

I knew it—I really enjoyed talking more than fighting on the battlefield.

CHAPTER 411
JOY TO THE WORLD. LIGHT KI-YOUNG HAS DESCENDED (2)

It was the perfect time to start talking. We managed to overcome a dangerous situation, but we were still at a disadvantage. The mages and Dialigua were out of mana, especially Dialugia because she used all of her mana on Breath to destroy the mana surrounding the Semi-Mythic meteor.

I was sure it was the same for Kim Hyun-Sung. He was superhuman—yes, but he cleaved a meteor in half in addition to using his stamina on the battlefield.

He couldn't be compared to an ordinary person, but there was no way he wasn't tired after everything, so it would be better for him not to use any more of his powers in the meantime.

'I only have one Light Bomb Potion left… '

The allied forces were still surrounded by the enemy. The enemy mages were also at their limits, so we weren't completely at a disadvantage, but we were still in a bad situation. I wasn't sure if this method would work, but it wouldn't hurt to start talking since the war was currently at a lull.

'Even my surroundings don't look so bad.'

The envoy of the gods was in the middle of the falling lights. Friend or foe, everyone was looking at the lights falling from the sky.

I spoke cautiously again, and I saw everyone looking at me.

- I'll say it again! Everyone! Stop fighting! My dear Republicans! Please lay down your weapons!

"It's the comeback of Benigoa!"

“It’s the comeback of the Goddess of Benigoa!”

“Father Lee Ki-Young…”

“Father Lee Ki-Young! It’s dangerous!”

The allies voiced their worries, but the Republic’s reaction was more important than their reactions. I started looking around and saw that some of them seemed to be hesitating while some of them looked at me like I was spouting nonsense. They received prior training, so most of them stared at me like I was bullshitting. I understood that there was no way my words would reach them, but I was sure that they would be able to hear me at the very least because the war was currently in a lull.

- Please lay down your weapons. It’s useless to keep fighting. Continuing this war will only harm both sides. This fight isn’t for all of you—for your benefit or for the benefit of your families. What are you fighting for? What’s the reason you’re standing there?

“…”

- All of you! Aren’t you here to protect your country? This fight stained with madness isn’t for the Republic. The Sacred Democratic Country has never invaded the Republic, and the commanders of the Republic know this better than anyone else. As the envoy chosen by Benigoa and Elune, if I’m lying, then I shall receive divine punishment. We didn’t invade the Republic, and they are lying to you. Open your eyes. Open your eyes! Open your eyes and see the truth!

There was no reaction.

- The ones we really need to fight are smiling while watching all this. The demon summoner Jin Cheong is using the Republic as his shield, and he sent all of you to the battlefield. He started this war between the Republic and the Democratic Country for his own safety and to wreak havoc on the continent. This war is what the evil forces want. We are not each other’s enemies—our enemies are the threats encroaching on the continent. We have to join forces to face those threats!

“…”

- If humanity does not unite, then it will be impossible to stop those threats. Please

lay down your weapons, everyone. We no longer need to fight. Our enemies have conspired to create this war, so there is nothing for us to gain from this war!

I had an idea why no one was reacting to my words. They were definitely thinking that they would be under my spell the moment they reacted to my words, but I was sure that it wasn't the only reason.

The Republican soldiers weren't really getting swayed by my words. The priests on their side would be swayed somewhat, but the priests didn't really matter.

It hadn't been that long since the soldiers fought to claim each other's lives, so there was no way my words would quickly extinguish the fire that was burning in their hearts. If the goddess' mirror were still functioning, then there was a chance that I could persuade them, but talking without displaying the facts wouldn't convince anyone.

If this continued, a small incident could easily exacerbate things.

The people around the demon summoner were probably thinking that they didn't need to respond to my words. Of course, there was also a chance that they thought my words weren't worthy of a response, but I continued talking despite all that.

- We have to lay down our swords and join hands for the things that are more important than this war. As an ally of the Republic, the Sacred Democratic Country will never take the initiative to point its sword at you. The history of conflict will disappear after this war, and I'll work hard to make sure that it will happen. Please lay down your weapons. Today's incident is the first step, and it's a big step toward putting an end to the history of continuous wars. Please stop fighting. Stop fighting!

The issue was I had no idea what kind of incident would exacerbate things.

- We must join hands for a bigger cause. Please lay down your weapons!

While I was talking, an arrow suddenly flew toward me.

'That bastard…!'

I quickly mustered my mana, and even though I had no idea where it came from, it was pretty powerful. I snapped my finger and quickly put up a wall, but with a *boom*, I was pushed back. I didn't roll on the ground pathetically, but I was sure that was

enough to exacerbate things.

Right there and then, there was an explosion from the enemy formation. I wasn't sure if they were planning to do something, but everyone started to get worked up when they heard that explosion.

"Shit!"

"Don't stop! It's a trap!"

"Father Lee Ki-Young! You dirty bastards…!"

"What are the mages doing?!"

"Hold up your weapons! Prepare for battle! All units prepare for battle!"

"Don't get pushed back! Hold out! Hold out!"

"Protect Father Lee Ki-Young! Cast protection spells on Father Lee Ki-Young!"

Many orders started flying around, but in a nutshell, chaos fell on the battlefield. The enemy tried their best to break through the allied forces, and the latter did their best to maintain formation.

'This isn't good… '

If the war continued, it would cause massive damage to both sides, and it didn't really matter which side would win because the neighboring nations would definitely take advantage of this.

The allied forces were at a disadvantage, and I didn't really like to have glory scars.

"*Ah!*"

"You dirty servants of the demon!"

"Bastards! I won't let you live! Shoot the arrows! Arrows!"

- Please stop fighting! It's unnecessary to fight anymore. My dear Republicans! You're all being tricked. We must not create a situation worse than this because that's what

the forces of evil want! I know it's difficult, but please stop! Let go of your hatred and rage so that we can drive away the madness. We must join hands and walk forward together!

"Kill them! Shit!"

- Please stop fighting! Everyone! There's no reason to shed innocent blood anymore!

"Don't get pushed back!"

- Please stop fighting! Everyone! Stop! Fighting!

"You dirty Republican dogs!"

"You puppets of the Democratic Country! I won't forgive you!"

I shouted with all my might, but no one was listening to me anymore amidst the madness and the chaos on the battlefield. The spies among the soldiers shouted louder and louder to exacerbate the chaos. There were people hidden amongst the soldiers who were intentionally working the soldiers up, but I couldn't capture all of them.

'Smart move. Shit.'

I was sure I would have done something similar if I were Jin Cheong because he was in an advantageous situation. He probably felt that he had obtained a desirable result by completely cutting off our communication channels. It was unfortunate, and if the atmosphere of the battlefield had calmed down a bit more, then we could have avoided another fight.

Now, the situation had gone beyond the road of no return.

'Shit. This isn't working out… '

I felt anxious, and I could already deduce what the demon summoner was thinking.

'It's over.'

Or…

'We just have to keep going.'

Perhaps even…

'It's the final blow.'

His hidden cards didn't bring great results, but I was sure that he was thinking that he still profited a lot from his hidden cards.

'He's probably thinking that way. I'm sure of it.'

It was a bit early, but it was possible that he was already celebrating his victory.

Of course, that was until the arrival of the gift I had prepared for him…

- Please stop fighting!

My head started hurting as I kept shouting, but when I saw Lee Ji-Hye's signal, I found it hard to contain my laughter. It was happening earlier than I thought, but I was still happy to see it happening. I wanted to laugh out loud, so it was regretful that I couldn't do so.

After all, I wasn't supposed to know what was happening out there. My role was to act as if I were ignorant, while the masked scum Jin Cheong was cognizant of everything. I was sure our lovely regressor was biting his lips right now, and I saw how the faces of some of the soldiers turned pale at the sight of it.

"You dirty bastards…!"

"You demonic Republic bastards! How could you wear the mask of humans and do something like this?!"

"You dirty scums! Bastards!"

"Demon summoner…"

"What kind of bullshit…"

- Shit! Prepare for battle! Prepare for battle!

The enemy was surprised by the sudden change, but they would soon realize why I was shouting ‘prepare for battle’ at my troops.

There was a detachment a bit distant from the battlefield. At first glance, it became clear that the detachment was the Republican reinforcement from the Misty Forest, and of course, I wasn’t the one who brought them here. *Ah!* I brought them here *unofficially*, but Demon Summoner Jin Cheong was the one who brought them here *officially.*

“T-the undead?”

“The undead?”

The detachment was composed of undead troops wearing the armor and hoisting the banner of the Republic.

- You’ve finally shown your true colors! Your dirty demon summoner!

Demon Summoner Jin Cheong had sacrificed his soldiers in the Misty Forest, and he brought them over here as reinforcements after turning them into members of the undead.

- God will not forgive you! You dirty demon!

The masked scum had committed an unforgivable sin against the gods and man.

Demon Summoner Jin Cheong.

The arrival of the undead army caused chaos among the soldiers on the battlefield.

CHAPTER 412
JOY TO THE WORLD. LIGHT KI-YOUNG HAS DESCENDED (3)

The sight before me was indescribable, and it would be strange not to shout after seeing that many undead creatures. It was the same as earlier. The jaws of the allied forces dropped because of the shocking sight, and the enemy forces didn't know what to do as well because they couldn't quite wrap their heads around the situation. No one had any idea if they were allies or enemies, but thanks to my urgent remarks, the enemy troops seemed to have gotten the idea that they were undead beings created by Demon Summoner Jin Cheong.

Of course, they were hesitant about accepting it.

"Shit…"

"Prepare for battle! Prepare for battle! Those Undead are at least epic rank!"

The undead creatures Han Sora and Jung Ha-Yan had made with their heart and soul were different from Average and Rare Undead. They were at least Epic, and they even looked like liches. I honestly didn't expect that they would be capable of something like this.

I knew Jung Ha-Yan was unexpected, but I was really surprised this time because she basically made an army of undead creatures. It was technically different, but comparing what she had done to the meteor earlier, her achievement was still a great one.

'I mean, Han Sora even summoned Belial, so I'm sure this was nothing for them.'

Obviously, the quality of the undead creatures Han Sora and Jung Ha-Yan had made couldn't be compared to the demons that Demon Summoner Jin Cheong had summoned, but the dark mist enveloping each of the undead creatures made them look incredibly intimidating. A few of them even stood out among the pack.

Their numbers were terrifying as well. Honestly, I tried looking for a more wicked way to do this, but this was the most humane way to resolve all this. A plan more wicked than this would be too much for my conscience to swallow.

The soldiers were tired, but they had to face the undead. The wickedness of the masked scum Jin Cheong of this timeline was definitely comparable to the wickedness of the masked scum Jin Cheong of our regressor's past life.

Rather than turning his enemies into undead creatures, the masked scum actually turned his own soldiers into members of the undead.

Demon Summoner Jin Cheong had thrown away all caution to the wind just to win this war and cause chaos throughout the continent. This was the true colors of Jin Cheong—the masked scum in our lovely regressor's past life.

"*Grrrrr…*"

"*Kyaaaaaah!!*"

The army of undead had many types of undead creatures among them. There were many low-ranked skeletons to make up the numbers, and there were also some of them who could still use their abilities while they were still alive. Of course, towering above them all were death knights and liches. They had already died, but they hadn't escaped the fate of being chess pieces, so the undead voiced their resentment and loyalty toward the demon summoner in their own unique way.

Naturally, I started talking because I knew better than anyone that I wouldn't get an opportunity better than this one.

- Everyone! This is the true colors and the goal of the demon summoner!

'Indeed.'

- Look at those undead creatures. Look at those fallen figures hoisting the banner of the Republic. This isn't a war for the Democratic Country and the Republic. This is a war created by a demon's conspiracy. Open your eyes! Open them and join us!

'Come with us! Let's go!'

- We must not point our swords toward each other. The survival of the continent is at

stake. We can't let this continent fall into the hands of demons. The Sacred Democratic Country will definitely go down first, but the Republic will fall after us. Let's fight together! Let's join hands for all the races living on this land!

'Let's become one!'

- Your command center has already become the playground of demons. Come with us, and be with the gods! I beg you to join the light. Everyone! Please join the army of light!

'Hurry up, you bastards! We're in an urgent situation!'

I sounded like a politician running for an election. I tried to be as persistent as possible, but the atmosphere died down a little bit. I talked as much as I could, but the Republican soldiers weren't reacting to it. Of course, my voice could finally reach them. It was evidenced by the fact that they weren't attacking the allied forces.

The enemy field commanders who kept on ordering the soldiers to attack and the soldiers who lost their comrades in the chaotic battlefield all gulped at the appearance of the undead. The situation had definitely changed. Earlier, I was simply spouting nonsense for them, but now, there was actually proof of what I was saying, so it was only natural for them to fall into chaos and confusion.

"W-What's that…"

"Are they really our allies?"

"Oh god…"

Our lovely Varian priests were the most affected. The devout priests who stood on the battlefield for the Republic closed their eyes and started searching for their god.

- Priests of Varian! Join us! Please fight for god! I beg you!

No one really made any drastic move, but I knew my words were effective because I could see them trying to do something. I knew that they would soon send a spokesperson, but the individual who started speaking was the demon summoner.

He tried his best to speak calmly, but he sounded a bit worked up. After all, he was now about to create yet another achievement like what he had done in Laios. I was

sure he was excited to hear the praises of his fellow servant of demons.

'That scummy bastard…!'

- T-This is all fabricated. Those undead creatures have nothing to do with the Republic, and this is nothing more than a fabricated scenario created by Father Lee Ki-Young, who's trying to cause chaos in this battle. Just like the incident in Laios, he's a demon trying to trick everyone using black magic.

- I'm the envoy of light chosen by Benigoa and Elune. Aren't you scared of the heavens, you demon summoner?! I was given this light to pass judgment on demons like you. This light is to judge you who tricked innocent soldiers and shed innocent blood! I shall pass judgment on you, who started this war to cause chaos on this continent. If I was related to those dark forces in some way, then may the gods punish me. This holy power is proof of my alignment, and it is the greatest power to deny your lies!

- Shut up! You dirty fraud! You're the one causing chaos on this land. Do you really think that you'll be able to hide your dirty acts by hiding behind the name of the gods?! The truth will be revealed someday. Do you really think that I don't know about the dirty deeds you have committed in the Sacred Democratic Country?! I know you caused chaos in the empire using democracy as a shield, and I also know that you own the black market there.

- How dare you to lie to me, you dirty demon! You sure know how to obscure the truth with your words. Republicans! The demon summoner is lying! The whispers of the demon caused this war between the Sacred Democratic Country and the Republic! His words are the whispers of demons! He lied about how I was the one who started all this, how I wanted to create chaos on the continent, and how I own a black market! He's lying! Do not believe him. Believe what you see! Open your eyes and take a look at the truth! Do not fall for fabrications and instigations!

- The truth will be revealed! You dirty traitor of humanity!

- The light is the truth! Demon Summoner Jin Cheong!

- What you have isn't the light, and even if it is the light, the gods who bestowed it upon you are out of their minds—they are out of their minds!

- To deny the holy power of the gods is denying the gods itself! You're truly a demon

who is unafraid of the heavens! Your reflection in the goddess' mirror is your true colors, and the holy power I possess is the truth! The blood spilled on this battlefield is the truth, everyone in pain is the truth, and even those who had been devoured by darkness are the truth as well! How dare you deny them?! How dare you deny their sacrifices?! Do you really think that everyone will fall for the dirty words coming out of your mouth?!

- You crazy bastard!! The Republic doesn't have a reason to control undead creatures…

- Everyone, let's face it together! Fight with us!

Difficult-to-answer questions could be easily resolved by answering in a sincere voice filled with light.

- There is no reason for us to do such a thing…

- Join us! Be with the light!

Honestly, there wasn't a reason to fight with words because the mindless undead army was already charging while foaming at their mouths. Thankfully, the undead creatures could differentiate the Sacred Democratic Country from the Republic. They left the Republican soldiers alone and were pointing their swords and using their black magic against the Sacred Democratic soldiers.

Jin Cheong kept denying it, but the reality was cruel.

"*Kyaaaaaaaah!*"

"Holy power! We need more holy power!"

"*Roooooooooar!*"

"Stop them! Shit! You dirty demon summoner! Aren't you afraid of god?! You demons!"

"Use your swords for the continent! Don't stand with darkness!"

"*Ahhhhhhhh!!*"

My heart started racing as the army of light was being pushed back by the undead army. The army of light remained steadfast, but it wouldn't be strange if we suffered casualties.

"Don't fall back!"

"Don't die no matter what! We're the knights of Everia who are fighting in the name of Elune! Let everyone know that light still exists on this continent!"

"Priest! Prieeeeest!!"

"Pull the injured soldiers back! Maintain formation and stop the undead!"

The elves wiped away the tears from their eyelids and resisted the darkness as strongly as they could. The dwarves did the same because they despised the undead, and the soldiers of the Sacred Democratic Country responded as well.

There weren't any casualties yet, but it wouldn't be strange if soldiers ended up dying. If it weren't for the fact that they were still able to maintain their formation, then I was sure that they wouldn't have been able to endure for this long.

- Light is what reveals the darkness. Each of us is but a small candle, but if we gather and unite, we'll be able to drive away the darkness. We need every power we can get, and I hope you will realize that!

The words I spouted sounded like they came from a famous song, but after I was done with my speech, I started walking as well.

- Now! We must attack the imposters of the Sacred Democratic Country now! This is a fabricated scenario created by them! The undead creatures have nothing to do with the Republic, and if we strike, the truth will be revealed Raise your swords again and fight!

- We don't need to fight each other! The real enemy is before us! Open your eyes. The light is the truth!

- Hold up your swords, soldiers of the Republic! Fight!

- I order the soldiers of the Sacred Democratic Country! I won't allow you to attack the soldiers of the Republic! They're not the enemy! We don't need to fight them!

- You c-crazy bastard! Do you really think that anyone will fall for your scheme?!

- Everyone… let's join hands! The light will be with you! You must not listen to the demon summoner! I want you to remember the incident in Laios! He summoned these undead creatures to fight for him!

- We won't respond to your crazy remarks. All soldiers—

- The light will be with you! The light will be together with you! Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid, no matter what!

- Lee Ki-Young…!

- We have to unite before the great threat!

Mankind would soon be united, but it was still too early for me to celebrate. However, a piece of background music filled with hope was already playing in my head.

CHAPTER 413
JOY TO THE WORLD. LIGHT KI-YOUNG HAS DESCENDED (4)

- The light will be with you! The light will be together with you! Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid, no matter what! We have to become one before the great threat!

- All soldiers, listen! Don't listen to the Democratic Country's cunning lies!

- Believe what you see!

"It's regretful that I can't record all this…" I[1] commented.

I was disappointed that I couldn't record the situation before me, and it was because I had never imagined that I would get to witness something like this. Of course, I knew that something like this would happen, but the unfolding situation was beyond me.

"I should record this…" I muttered.

"Miss Lee Ji-Hye, did you say something…" someone asked.

"No, it's nothing," I answered.

"Okay."

"By the way, can we reactivate the goddess' mirrors now?" I asked.

"We still can't activate them, but I think we'll be able to reactivate them soon. I'm not sure if the spell that fell earlier affected it, but the mana supply of the communication system has greatly weakened. It could recover naturally, but…" they replied.

"Please make sure to repair it as soon as possible. It's the top priority," I ordered.

“We’ll do our best.”

Goosebumps broke out all over my body at the sight in front of me. I was convinced that no scum alive could pull off a deception on this scale. I was watching from afar, but even I could feel the overwhelming pressure the undead army was exuding.

The way they savagely attacked the allied forces made them look like an undead army that had emerged from the depths of hell to slaughter the humans of this continent. The sight of so many undead creatures was mind-boggling.

The allied forces were covered in light, and they looked extremely noble in the way they fought against the darkness.

I knew that all this was fabricated, but the sight was enough for me to burst into tears.

The series of events was like a well-written script, and it stupefied the Republicans. It also became clear which side was fighting with the light and which side stood with the darkness. They weren’t expressing it, but I was sure the Republicans’ plans were being torn apart in real time.

They weren’t making any drastic moves because they had no reason to do so.

I was sure that everyone was starting to realize which side was the side of light, but the timing was still important. I had to get them to trust me before the Republican soldiers fell for the demon summoner’s sweet talk.

‘This is a historical moment.’

I was sure that everyone would still remember this day, even after a thousand—no, even after two thousand years had passed. This day would forever be a part of Honorary Cardinal Lee Ki-Young’s epic story.

‘And… ’

The thought of it alone made me quiver…

While I was engrossed on the battlefield, a voice interrupted me.

“Miss Lee Ji-Hye, what should we do about the troops…?”

“I don’t know what orders I can give that’ll be beneficial to them… I had already done everything that I could. Whether we win or lose… it’s up to them now. From now on, only a minimum number of people will remain in the command center. Everyone, including the rear unit, will go to the battlefield immediately and support the troops,” I ordered.

“Yes, ma’am.”

“I’ll leave it up to you.”

They had to be under a great deal of pressure because even the officials thought they had to lend a hand. There was an unknown sense of burden on their faces.

‘I’m glad that there are a lot of noble people.’

I really wanted to join the party, but right now, I had to make sure that the goddess’ mirror would work as intended once it was online once again. The undead army’s arrival here meant that Jung Ha-Yan had to have been successful, and she was definitely on her way here.

‘Then… ’

We should be able to fix the goddess’ mirror and ensure that it would work as intended.

- Father Lee Ki-Young of the Democratic Country is a fraud and a liar! Don’t be swayed by his words and stop the troops of the Democratic Country! Don’t be swayed, no matter what!

‘He sure talks a lot.’

Finally, the goddess’ mirror went back online, albeit temporarily.

“M-Miss Lee Ji-Hye…!”

“I’m watching as well,” I said.

“Our mana isn’t enough to maintain this for long,” they said.

‘Good news.’

“Please display it right away. Look for struggling troops and display as many of them as you can on the goddess’ mirrors. I’m sure there are those who still have no idea of the details of the situation just yet. It’s not a fight both sides can win with just their troops. Both forces must join hands and fight, and we have to make sure that they will realize that fact, so please do it right now,” I explained.

“Okay.”

The situation would have been a bit easier to handle if the undead creatures couldn’t differentiate between Democratic and Republican soldiers. However, letting the undead army attack only the allied soldiers was more effective if the goal was to restrain Demon Summoner Jin Cheong.

I was sure that Demon Summoner Jin Cheong wanted the undead army to move autonomously…

Fortunately, a bit of editing and a dash of fabrication could change everything.

Of course, I knew what Lee Ki-Young wanted the most right now, so I immediately placed my hand on the device. A few moments later, the goddess’ mirror appeared everywhere, and the main hologram that was set up for the rear allied detachments displayed the allied troops fighting without any support on the front lines. I didn’t show the heroes like Father Lee Ki-Young or Kim Hyun-Sung because showing people of the same rank as them would make them sympathize with those people.

‘This is the right thing to do.’

- Stop them! James! James! Holy power! Stop them from coming in! We must protect Father Lee Ki-Young!

- God, oh god!

- We can do it. Reinforcements will come soon! We just have to endure!

- Move the injured soldiers back! They need treatment!

- Have we run out of holy power?

- Those dirty bastards… Do you really think that you’ll be forgiven after pulling something like this?!

- Hold up your shields! Don't put down your spears! The survival of the continent is on the line! Don't get pushed back, no matter what!! Our families are behind us. It'll all be over if we don't stop them here!

- Maria!

It was a scripted scene, but to some, it was reality. Seeing the ordinary soldiers resisting the approaching darkness instead of fighting for their personal greed and benefits made me tear up a little. Some were calling for priests as they were bleeding, and some soldiers protected their comrades by holding up their shields. I also saw people with serious injuries and priests coughing up blood while mustering the final vestiges of their holy power. Everyone was fighting in their own way while enveloped in light.

'This will work…!'

The goddess' mirror was displaying the allied forces, not some army in a faraway land, so obviously, I thought it was going to be effective. The Republican soldiers were moved by the allied forces, and they started moving as well.

'Move…!'

Of course, fighting together when they had been fighting against each other was bound to be difficult, and I thought about getting rid of that barrier that differentiated between ally and enemy, but…

'Move…!'

Lee Ki-Young's decision wasn't wrong. Everyone was about to unite.

'Move…!'

- Stop them! Shit!! Hold out as much as possible!

- My holy power…

- We'll endure it for as long as we can and counterattack once we cannot endure it anymore. I'm sure the command center will send reinforcements soon…

- Hold up your shield. Don't give up… hold up your shields!

- We can become one. Please fight with us! Together! Fight with us!

- You dirty corpses!

His decision couldn't possibly be wrong.

'Move…!'

"Move! You stupid Republican bastards! You still don't know who the real enemy is?! Do you really think that it will be over once the Democratic Country goes down? Why can't you see that the Republic is next?! You idiots! What are you idiots thinking when these corpses are already right in front of you? Raise your swords! Protect yourselves! Leave your name in the history books, you stupid puppets!" I yelled and slammed my fists into the table.

Fortunately, the scene that I had been waiting for finally appeared. The officials nearby stared at me in shock when I shouted all of a sudden, but this wasn't the time for me to think about my image. In addition, I was sure everyone would react the same if they could see what I was seeing in the goddess' mirror.

- Shit…!

- Shit. Raise—raise your swords! Take care of the undead first. We'll start there!

- Help the Democratic Country!

- That's…!

- We must assist them with h-holy power. I want all Varian priests with enough holy power to follow me. We'll fight later. Let's take care of the undead first. Varian's holy knights start from the left! Move!

- Put it on the ground! On the ground!

- Shit… I…

"That's right. That's what I'm talking about!" I yelled with clenched fists.

The change occurred in a region of the battlefield where there was a high concentration of Varian priests and Varian holy knights, and I quickly displayed them

in the rear mirror.

The change wasn't that huge, but it had to be displayed. It was an extremely helpful scene to those who were still struggling to make a decision as well as to those who still had no idea what to do. After all, nothing was more effective than herd mentality.

Eventually, the southern and the northern region of the battlefield seemed to have gradually started to become one. The beautiful scene being displayed in the goddess' mirrors urged unison between the allied and enemy forces.

The undead had to have been waiting for this moment because they started pointing their swords at Republican soldiers as well. A few moments later, the battlefield became a war between light and dark rather than a war between humans.

I was sure that not even cartoons from the 80s had disgusting cliches like this, but it was disgustingly effective.

"I guess there's a reason why they're called cliches."

There was no need for me to watch anymore. Now, I just had to think about how we would wrap things up. Of course, it wouldn't be good if we just ended things like this.

I knew that what would happen afterward wasn't my job, but I had an idea about what kind of scene Oppa wanted to depict. Whenever one was in a dangerous situation, something cliche would usually happen immediately afterward.

When I realized that, I couldn't help but think that the history books of the future might become filled with nothing but fabricated information.

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1. Lee Ji-Hye's POV ☜

CHAPTER 414
JOY TO THE WORLD. LIGHT KI-YOUNG HAS DESCENDED (5)

I couldn't help but nod happily at the grand unification, but I was honestly feeling kind of anxious. In the end, a beautiful scene unfolded, and I was sure that the demon summoner didn't want to see this scene at all. If I were in his position, I would be thinking hard by now about how I could turn the tables.

'He probably doesn't have an answer.'

In other words, it could be said that we really got him this time. He was like a murderer who encountered the police at the scene of the crime while holding the murder weapon in his hand. It wasn't any different from what happened in Laios. All evidence and circumstances were pointing at the demon summoner, and there was no way he could still escape. Of course, I still had more gifts for him.

'Just accept it.'

I admit that he was a talented commander. He got me a few times during the battle, and I got into quite a few dangerous situations as well. I thought hard about it, but I overlooked most of my thoughts and walked straight into the smokescreen strategy he had prepared. If I were in the command center rather than on the battlefield, I would have already pulled my hair out a few times in frustration. They really got us cornered, but now, it was the other way around. Moreover, I was sure that there was no way he could turn this around. After all, the current situation had nothing to do with the war, so his vast knowledge and methods couldn't possibly turn this situation around.

The situation was no longer in his hands. The great unification had happened, and the humans had united to drive away the undead, so there was no time to worry about the command hierarchy or formations.

Right now, Jin Cheong had two choices. He could either stare dumbly at the unfolding situation or do his best to run away just like last time. Of course, the latter didn't

really matter if he couldn't even run away.

I stopped using voice amplification magic because I didn't have to respond to him anymore. I just had to do my best and show the people my role in this war, and that was it.

'I need to wrap this up well.'

Since this was the climax, the ending was important. I could watch the situation safely from the rear, but that was out of the question. To show everyone that I was fighting harder than anybody else, I had to pick up a spear. It was like the show that politicians put on for votes. It didn't sound that much, but it was pretty effective.

"For the continent!"

"For the light! For the Goddess of Benigoa, Elune, and Varian!"

"Raise the flags! Let's prove that light still exists on the continent! For the children of Benigoa!"

"Keep shooting those arrows!"

It was definitely a dangerous situation, but the resistance of mankind against the darkness was heartwarming, and I was sure that I wasn't the only one who was imagining a bright future right now.

When I stood at the frontline while holding a spear, I saw a grotesque-looking undead that I didn't want to face at all. It seemed like it was flinching toward me, but it was actually moving based on the order it had received. The sight of ordinary soldiers working hard to stop the undead was enough reason for me to make a statue out of them.

The more time I spent fighting, the more I got covered with sweat and filth. This should be enough to create the image I wanted. *Ah!* I didn't forget to be worried about those around me.

"Father Lee Ki-Young! You must head inside! It's dangerous!"

"*Ha… ha…* I can't just stand by and watch. I'm fine," I said.

“Father Lee Ki-Young…!”

“Everyone is fighting together. Even the Republican soldiers are fighting. If I hide, then many of them will criticize me. *Whoo.* I have to fulfill the role I was given. I can fight the undead as well,” I explained.

“But…”

“I won’t listen. We’re in an urgent situation. Please understand,” I told them.

“O-Okay…”

“I can provide even a little bit of help. Hang in there, everyone.”

To be honest, I was a huge inconvenience to them on the front line. I was fine, but the others had to move in a way that would enable them to protect me at any moment amidst the ever-changing battlefield. However, I couldn’t possibly miss this opportunity to promote myself, and as if it was agreeing with me, the goddess’ mirror reflected my image. It broke my heart that I couldn’t show a more dramatic side of myself, but the way I continued emitting holy power proved that I was indeed an envoy of the gods.

“Father Lee Ki-Young is with us!”

“Father Lee Ki-Young is with us! Lift your swords!”

It had a positive effect because the morale of the soldiers shot to the roof. The fact that I had to fight the disgusting undead made me feel somewhat sour, but I could endure it.

When I thought about creating a new scene, a large-framed undead creature started charging toward me. I knew it couldn’t kill me, but it still made the hair on my back stand.

‘I can just play with this one… ’

The thought of creating a touching scene that would make people cry and make their nose run made me smile, but the allied forces quickly surrounded the large-framed undead. They couldn’t stand by and watch me fall in danger. At that, I became sure once more that I couldn’t film a touching situation without Kim Ye-Ri, Ahn Ki-Mo,

and Park Deok-Gu.

'It's hard to fabricate… '

I had no choice but to approach matters with a realistic mindset because it would make me feel kind of uncomfortable if it didn't end the way I wanted it to end. I had to give the impression that the allied forces and the entire human race were in danger.

It was the only way Kim Hyun-Sung would understand.

I glanced at the goddess' mirror and saw our lovely regressor. I noticed how exhausted he looked.

'It's understandable.'

I knew he was safe, but in addition to injuries all over his body, he had long exhausted his mana as well. The sight broke my heart. He could actually rest for a bit, but he was so anxious and antsy, as if he knew that all this was going to happen.

'Maybe this situation is somewhat similar.'

I became proud of myself. After all, I was the one who created this undead crisis, and even though the undead army was made as a gift for Jin Cheong. It was also a form of gift for Kim Hyun-Sung as well. My plan was to completely wipe out his doubt about the masked scum, but the issue was that I had no idea if our lovely regressor was satisfied.

I was sure the demon summoner was satisfied with the gift, but the anxious Kim Hyun-Sung made me feel like all this still wasn't enough to satisfy him.

'This isn't enough?'

I thought this would be enough to prove that Jin Cheong was the masked scum, but the wicked surgery of turning his allies into undead creatures had to have been nothing but a warm-up for the masked scum in our lovely regressor's past life. I really wanted to prepare something new, but I neither had the time nor the idea.

'Shit.'

Now, all I could do was create a more dramatic situation. Anything more than that could backfire. I was a bit uncomfortable with the idea, but I was sure I would be able to cover up the holes after the war. No, the final blow I had prepared could be enough to erase Kim Hyun-Sung's doubt, so I raised my spear once more.

I wanted to make a scene involving my resistance against the undead with the soldiers, but there wasn't really a sense of crisis, so it was a bit dull.

'It'll look more realistic if the dead soldiers start rising up here… '

I wasn't sure if they heard me, but as soon as I gave the signal, the dead Republican soldiers started rising up. They were nothing more than low-ranked undead creatures, but their appearance was enough to put pressure on the exhausted soldiers.

"The enemy…!"

"They're not that strong! Don't break formation! Endure it as much as possible!"

"The tired soldiers should move back! Those who still have stamina shall protect the line!"

"Goddess of Benigoa!"

The resilient undead screeched and started roaming all over the place. Jung Ha-Yan and Han Sora definitely misunderstood the meaning of the signal I sent to them, which meant 'reinforcements needed' because they started using their powers. It felt like a Legendary undead had popped out from somewhere, and as time passed, I couldn't get rid of the feeling that the entire front line was being pushed back.

'Shit. They're too strong. It's really difficult to endure it… '

The front line was gradually falling apart. The front line that had been maintaining the exhausted soldiers was falling apart, and the undead army was starting to break through our formation.

"Support! We need help with holy power!"

"But…"

“Support the side that’s falling! I want the Republican soldiers to help the Democratic Country as much as possible!”

“*Aaaahhh!*”

“Don’t lose! Hang in there!”

The front line was falling apart faster than I expected. I thought that they would be able to hold out a bit more, but the soldiers seemed like they had truly exhausted the final vestiges of their strength.

‘Maybe it’s obvious… ’

I was sure Kim Hyun-Sung and the named players stationed in each region were feeling an immense amount of pressure after the Sacred Democratic Country and the Republic united to clash against the undead army. We were definitely in a dangerous situation, but I wasn’t sure if this was the level of threat Kim Hyun-Sung was imagining. I thought about putting more pressure, but the pressure was already starting to become too much for the soldiers.

‘It’s about time I become a bit more aggressive… ’

“Shit! Shit! Endure it!”

“The 13th detachment is falling apart! Support the 13th detachment! Support!”

“The Republican soldiers and the undead army…!”

“They’re still alive. We’ll create a separate detachment right now and save them!”

“We don’t have soldiers to spare.”

“Shit! Shit! Oh god!”

“Goddess of Benigoa! Have you forsaken us? Goddess of Benigoa!”

‘Not yet! But it’s close…!’

“Elune! Power! Power! Give me the power to protect the continent!”

'A bit more, a bit more…!'

"Elune!"

The detachments maintaining their own formations started falling apart one by one, and the undead creatures that broke through the opening were jumping onto the priests and the mages. In addition, some of the Republican soldiers were being overpowered by the undead creatures, so it wasn't strange that they started calling out to their gods.

I lifted my head and saw Park Deok-Gu fighting by himself through the goddess' mirror. I saw him attacking the undead creatures that were attacking the Republican soldiers, and the emotions inside me burst like a deluge because I couldn't endure the prickling in my consciousness any longer. It felt like the voices from everywhere disappeared in the blink of an eye, and it didn't take long for a dazzling light to spread in all directions with me in the center.

Fwooooooooosh!

The world became brighter, and naturally, everyone's eyes landed on me. Perhaps it was because of my hazy consciousness, but the soldiers looked hazy to me. I closed my eyes to avoid their gazes, but I heard them cheering for me.

"A loyal vassal…!"

"The Goddess of Benigoa… has descended!"

'This is it, right?!'

It went exactly according to my plan. The second card I had created in case of an emergency was doing its part perfectly.

'The Advent of Benigoa cosplay!'

This happened because I drank a Light Bomb Potion.

'I'm Benigoa herself, you bastards!'

[Rare-ranked Forced Quest has been activated.]

[You… real piece of shit. Let go of me! Let go! Don't stop me! Let go of me, Elune! You bastard! That piece of shit is—I can't stand it any longer! (0/1)]

[The rare-ranked Forced Quest has been canceled for an unknown reason.]

The hopeless front line. The army of light was being pushed back by the army of darkness, and when the light was about to be completely devoured by darkness—a dazzling light engulfed the surroundings.

Skill name…

'Goddess Advent.'

I simply opened my mouth, but I could feel the light filling me up.

CHAPTER 415
JOY TO THE WORLD. LIGHT KI-YOUNG HAS DESCENDED (6)

The Dragon Breath Potion was a potion that I couldn't drink. After crafting a glass bottle that was in a similar shape as the organs that shot out Breath, I manage to create a potion that could make an explosion similar to Dialugi's Breath by using her mana and blood as catalysts.

It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the potion was created using various complex skills rather than the essence of alchemy. The item was made to explode, so of course, I couldn't drink it, and I also couldn't drink her blood, to begin with.

The Enhancement Serum was still waiting for its owner, but it had already told me that drinking Dialugia's blood would be an incredibly dangerous endeavor, but the Light Bomb Potion wasn't like the Enhancement Serum and the Dragon Breath Potion.

This brand-new item was bestowed upon me by the respectable Benigoa and that scum Elune, and it could differentiate between allies and hostiles. Moreover, it wasn't really an item that was made to simply explode.

[Light Bomb Potion - Semi-Mythic Rank]

[Alchemist of Light Exclusive Consumable Item - Daily Usage Limit (0/3)]

[This potion can only be created by the Alchemist of Light. This potion was made thanks to the Goddess of Benigoa's consideration and Elena's sacrifice. Once holy power is poured into the bottle, it identifies and differentiates allies and hostiles, causing a huge explosion of light. It instantly heals allies while revealing the location of hostile units. This potion can be used up to three times each day. P.S. You piece of shit. This is really the last time. I can't help you anymore.]

As described, it was a potion that would create a huge explosion of light, so what would happen if I drank it? Of course, I was curious, but I immediately found the

answer, so I didn't need to come up with assumptions because I had already drunk it before.

'Salit told me more about it.'

To be exact, I couldn't say that I drank it, but the potion was inside the monster. It struggled in pain, but the light coming from inside its body still managed to reach the allied forces, and it was actually pretty effective. Its effects would remain the same even when drunk, so it would injure hostiles while healing allies. Its range was limited, but the potion's effects were pretty straightforward. Drinking it wouldn't give me transcendent powers, and it wouldn't cause any dramatic changes to me as well. Obviously, the goddess wasn't really coming, and my holy power wouldn't increase drastically after drinking it. The effects were the same, but it made me look completely different.

I could hear voices from everywhere, and when I opened my eyes, a dazzling light shot in all directions. I could also hear a continuous hissing sound coming from inside of me.

My stomach was rumbling just a little bit, but I was actually fine. Honestly, I felt pretty good. My wounds were healed, and my exhaustion disappeared. In addition, the dazzling light wrapping around the soldiers was a sight to see.

The soldiers who had fallen from exhaustion started standing up, and those who had been injured by arrows or magic were getting healed as well. The miracle caused by the collaboration between Elune and Benigoa made everyone's jaws fall to the ground.

'The light is blinding.'

I couldn't help but feel proud at the sight of the light, which was still gradually expanding, and because it instantly lit the battlefield up, it felt like the fighting came to a halt at that instant.

It was the third time the dazzling light appeared today. The first time it appeared was when the meteor was falling, the second time was when the undead army appeared, and the third time was right now.

The battlefield went silent because the undead creatures were being affected by the dazzling light.

“She has descended! The Goddess of Benigoa has descended!”

Bullshit. She didn’t really descend, but I wanted to make them think that way.

I swept my gaze across the goddess’ mirror and saw Light Ki-Young completely enveloped by the light. The brilliant light also kept on flowing around Light Ki-Young.

The dazzling light definitely looked holy, and when I cast floating magic using my remaining mana, I gradually floated. It was kind of funny to see them looking at me with their mouths open. I thought I had to set things up beforehand, but it was ridiculous how some of them started crying while looking at me.

Of course, they could also be crying from relief because we were truly in a desperate situation just now.

“Goddess of Benigoa… Goddess of Benigoa!”

- I can hear.

“*Heuuuk!*”

‘Stop crying, guys. Let me talk. Stop crying.’

- I can hear your voices.

A deafening silence fell on the battlefield the moment I spoke. I couldn’t even hear Jin Cheong’s voice anymore. The undead creatures stopped moving as well, but it wasn’t because some kind of transcendent power had stopped them from moving.

Jung Ha-Yan was controlling them, so she simply stopped them from moving. Of course, the undead creatures were still acting to the best of their abilities. The undead creatures looked like there was a wall standing right before them.

It was a ridiculous sight, but they started acting like mimes while groping the invisible wall in front of them. The soldiers who saw this scene stared blankly at the undead creatures. It was understandable because I was also confused by what they were doing.

Eventually, I started speaking while hiding my satisfaction, and I saw them looking at me.

- I'm sure you have a lot of questions. Why I'm here, and why I descended when I haven't really shown myself for thousands of years now. Unfortunately, I can't explain all of it. I can't tell you everything. However, one thing I can tell you is that the continent is currently in danger.

"…"

"…"

- This is just the beginning. The force threatening this world hasn't shown itself yet. The servants of demons who have orchestrated all this and are currently watching these cursed creatures in glee are still hiding. They will still continue to threaten you. The hardships you're experiencing right now will be nothing compared to the hardships you'll experience in the future.

'Nice.'

Even *I* couldn't help but feel nervous about spouting this kind of lie. I was worried that I would say something wrong, but I continued talking despite my worries.

- Children of Elune. Children of Varian. And children of all that exist on this continent. The reason why I borrowed the body of this holy and pure man is that I thought I had to deliver this message again.

I slowly looked around before continuing.

- There are people who are a threat to the safety of this continent.

Pause…

- Even now, they're trying to paint this continent to match their colors, and it'll be difficult for you to fight them with your human bodies. However, I'm sure you'll be able to overcome them. Unite as one. If the living beings of this world united as one, it would be more than enough for you to overcome this threat. I'm sure you can do it. Unite as one in the name of light and overcome the upcoming hardships.

I ended my speech with a strong tone.

- Please be prepared.

Those words seemed like they were also targeting Demon Summoner Jin Cheong, but I didn't have to keep mentioning him. I just had to mention the existence of servants of demons, and our lovely priests would surely fill in the blanks.

"*Ah*, Goddess of Benigoa…!"

"Goddess of Benigoa. Goddess of Benigoa!"

I answered with a calm smile to the ones calling out her name, and that was the end of my role. I raised my hand slowly and extended it toward the cursed undead creatures, and I saw them writhing in pain.

"Kryaaaaaah!"

"*Grrrrr, grrrrr!*"

- You will be granted salvation.

I slowly swept my hand across them, and the undead creatures started to break down.

"A miracle…"

"Oh, Goddess…!"

"*Kryaaaaaaaaah!*"

-…

"*Grrrr.*"

Fwooooooooosh!

I drew a circle with my other hand, and the other undead creatures that couldn't be encompassed by my other hand started to break down as well. Of course, all this wasn't because of my holy power. I was simply deceiving their eyes by emitting light.

Honestly, the light I was emitting wasn't strong enough to kill these undead creatures. It had to be nothing more like a prickling sensation to them, but the undead creatures started falling like dominos because Jung Ha-Yan was releasing

them.

Jung Ha-Yan started releasing them in sync with my hand movements, and everything was going according to the well-written script. Since we managed to come this far, I could already see promising results.

I also squeezed a tear out of my eyelid to show everyone that Benigoa didn't want to do all this, and obviously, the Light Bomb Potion that I drank made my tear sparkle and stick out like a sore thumb.

I felt refreshed to see the undead creatures that had been causing trouble on the battlefield turn into ashes, and I knew it would seem like I had gone overboard, but I was sure that what I had done could be considered a miracle.

Soon enough, the priests started praying, and they created a solemn atmosphere.

- Those in pain will be blessed.

I was starting to find it difficult to move my hands, but I was smiling without realizing it.

'It's over.'

I was sure that the war had basically ended at this point.

No one would be able to give any more excuses after this. Even if the real Benigoa descended, the people here looked as if their belief in the fake Benigoa was strong enough for them to drive the real one away.

There was no need to differentiate between the two nations. The priests of Varian looked at me in case I mentioned Varian again, and the elves serving Elune showed respect toward the goddess.

- I'll leave whatever happens afterward to you since you are the owners of this land. I don't have much time. I borrowed this body without permission, so please take care of this holy human. It will be difficult to see you again, but please remember me.

"Goddess of Benigoa…!"

- You are not alone. We are always listening and watching over you. Please remember

that.

"…"

- You are not alone.

Once my speech was done, the brilliant light around me dispersed. Obviously, I started falling to the ground. I wasn't really scared because I knew that someone would catch me, but I didn't expect that instead of Kim Hyun-Sung or Park Deok-Gu, the ones who caught me were the soldiers.

They raised their hands up as if they were trying to catch a singer who jumped into the crowd in the middle of a concert. The only difference between that and my current situation was that this one felt solemn and religious.

I closed my eyes to show everyone that I fainted, and amidst the cries of the soldiers, their weapons made an audible *clang* as they simultaneously dropped their weapons to the ground.

"*Heuuuk…"*

"Mother…"

The war was over, and even though no one spoke first, I was sure that everyone felt the same thing. I slowly opened my eyes and saw clouds covering the sky and dazzling rays of light shining down on me.

"It's over…"

"Yes, Father Lee Ki-Young… it's over."

I mumbled to myself, but a soldier's answer made me smile a bit.

"What… happened?" I asked.

"You don't remember?" asked the soldier.

"I remember being enveloped by light—no, I don't even remember… what happened after that. Did that really happen? My mind is fuzzy…" I muttered.

“You’ll find out soon.”

I raised my head and saw soldiers of the Sacred Democratic Country and the Republic bowing toward me. It was funny to see them looking at me with disbelief, and they looked like they had no idea what to do. They also seemed like they were waiting for me to speak.

In the end, I had no choice but to speak in a low voice. “The war… it’s over.”

With that, cheers erupted all over the place.

CHAPTER 416
A GREAT WORLD TO LIVE IN (1)

- The war… the war is over. Yes, it's over. There's no reason for us to point our swords at each other anymore. There have been many misunderstandings, and we have been hostile toward each other for a long time. It's not limited to just this incident. The history of fighting between us has come to an end. I know how difficult it is to let go of hatred, revenge, and rage. After all, everyone lost someone dear to them during all this.

-…

- Regardless of which side you're standing, everyone lost someone precious to them. It could be a lover, a close comrade, or a family member. However, this is something that all of us have to overcome. It's everyone's homework. I know how hard it is to join hands when you have been pointing your swords at each other up until now, but we must move forward for the greater good. We must mature a bit more to overcome the pain and move forward.

-…

- Lift your heads, people of the Republic. It's not your fault. People of the Democratic Country, reach out your hand. It's not their fault. We know better than anyone how small our existence is when we're in front of a truly large being. We have to forgive each other before we can move forward. Lift your heads. There's no need to cry or be in despair. Let's move together. We must move together to put an end to this history of hatred. You have different values from each other—yes, but we have a large task in front of us. The continent is at risk because there are people threatening the safety of the continent. They're still hidden all over the continent, and they are after this land the gods had created for us. That's the message the Goddess of Benigoa left for all of you today. We must become one to overcome the upcoming hardships and trials. Lift your heads! It'll be difficult to heal the wound of today, but your wounds shall scab and heal. Just like how the dark clouds have cleared and the sun is shining on us right now—a new era is about to begin. Flowers will soon bloom on this blood-soaked land.

-…

- Let’s unite. We can become one under the will of the gods.

Silence descended, and I[1] could understand why everyone was so grim and solemn. Normally, I would hear the sound of glass drinkware clinking in this place because it normally had a boisterous atmosphere. But now? There were none of those. Even this place became enveloped with silence and solemnity.

Nick, standing next to me, started talking. I didn’t really like his voice, but I decided to put up with him today. He knew a lot of things, and it had already been a week since the war ended, so I knew I could extract some information from him.

“He’s a really amazing person.”

“I agree. I never get tired of watching it. That’s probably the reason why he appears in the goddess’ mirrors every day.”

“Of course, he’s amazing. He’s extraordinary. I’m sure it’s difficult to be in his shoes. He’s the one who suffered the most in the recent war, and he almost died during the Laios incident as well. They said that he had to go to the Everia Kingdom for treatment. In some ways, he experienced the biggest ordeal. Honestly, it was amazing how he offered to help the Republican soldiers without any conditions. He’s very generous.”

“I agree. I was there, and he was really amazing. I started crying without realizing it. The Republican soldiers cried as well, but I’m sure they cried more than I did. I even saw the Goddess of Benigoa descending into Father Lee Ki-Young’s body.”

“Really?”

“Of course! Words aren’t enough to describe how amazing it was! He did this with his hand, and just like that, the undead crumbled! And when he waved his left hand once, he became completely enveloped in light and then *pewpewpewpew!* Before the Goddess of Benigoa descended into his body, he wielded a spear and fought on the battlefield. Can you believe it?”

“Wow…”

“I’m sure there aren’t a lot of people who can do that. That demon summoner ended up being dragged out after hiding for so long. *Tsk*. I don’t even want to think about what would have happened if it weren’t for Father Lee Ki-Young. After fighting the Republican soldiers, we would have eventually…”

“It’d be nice if it would end there. There was no way we could have retreated alive from that battlefield if it weren’t for Father Lee Ki-Young. Anyway… does anyone know what Father Lee Ki-Young has been up to recently?”

Obviously, everyone looked at Nick. Nick drank a cup of water and judging from his confident demeanor, I was sure that he knew the answer to that question.

“It’s honestly kind of difficult for me to say this, but…”

“Come on, just tell us. Your meal for today will be on me.”

“You’ll hear the official announcement through the goddess’ mirror soon. Actually, this isn’t something you’ll hear through the goddess’ mirror…”

“Nick, you know we’ve been friends for the longest time now, right?”

“*Ahem*, it’s really hard for me to tell you this… If you promise not to tell anyone, I’ll tell you, but you really have to promise. It was a special order from Miss Kim Mi-Young of the Blue Guild, so it was hard for me to get this information.”

“Yes, of course. I’ll keep my lips sealed. So please…” I said and filled his empty cup with beer.

Nick looked around before speaking, “He’s apparently… in bad health.”

“What?!”

“*Shhh!*”

“Be quiet, Michael! Shit.”

“*Ah*, I’m sorry. Sorry. It was so surprising…”

“It’s not surprising at all if you think about it. Do you really think it’s easy for a human’s body to become a god’s vessel? Even if he’s the envoy of the Goddess of

Benigoa, it seemed like there are some side effects. He's not in the hospital anymore, but he's still in bad health. His recovery is fast, but…"

"Is that true?"

"Of course it is. He probably wants to hide his condition because he's worried that a lot of people would gather in front of where he's staying again, just like what happened in Laios. He has sacrificed a lot for us, but he's still worried about people like us."

"Wow…"

"Of course, there are some foreign affairs as well."

"Foreign affairs?"

"Right now, he's like a symbol of peace. He played the biggest role in ending the war completely, and if people heard that he was in bad condition, what would they think? I'm sure he's worried that the international discussions would fall apart."

"You mean the discussion about completely combining the tutorial dungeons and operating a unified educational institute?"

"That's not all. There's also the issue regarding the alliance with the Republic, the Declaration of the End of the Continental War, the Continental Peace Agreement, and the proposal for the revised Anti-Race Discrimination Act…"

"Politics, economics, and even military matters are involved. I don't know the details, but they are sensitive topics. They're the reasons why he has been attending international meetings despite being in bad health. It's really heartbreaking.

"His close associates are helping him, but he seems like he prefers to get things down by himself. Miss Kim Mi-Young seemed really worried about him as well. The members of the Blue Guild wanted to stop him, but no one can quell his passion so far."

"In fact, the only reason he recently took a break was that Mr. Kim Hyun-Sung asked him to do so…"

"He's a war hero."

“Now that I think about it, Mr. Kim Hyun-Sung is amazing as well. It’s truly a blessing to have not one but two of such extraordinary people on the Sacred Democratic Country’s side. The Goddess of Benigoa has truly blessed us.”

“This is a different topic, but… have you received any news regarding Jin Cheong?”

“That bastard… The matters about him hadn’t changed that much. I wouldn’t be satisfied even if we were to cut his head off, and I don’t really understand why they’re letting him stand trial. He’s still crying out loud that he’s not a demon summoner. Oh, look, it’s on! Look at the goddess’ mirror.”

- The trial of the demon summoner Jin Cheong, who caused chaos throughout the Republic, is fast approaching. Everyone is paying attention to the trial. Reporter Kim Sung-Kyeong of Lindel News shall share the details with everyone. Reporter Kim Sung-Kyeong?

- This is Reporter Kim Sung-Kyeong of Lindel News! On the 2nd, Helena, the heretic inquisitor of the Democratic Country, extradited the demon summoner Jin Cheong and she arrived at the capital along with Senator Marilyn. The entire continent is paying attention to the trial, so the atmosphere of this place is tenser than ever before. The proud Holy Knights of the Sacred Democratic Country are attending the trial along with His Holiness and Miss Oscar.

- I’m not a demon summoner. I’m telling you that I’m not. *Grrrr*. Lee Ki-Young, that bastard! Lee Ki-Young! Lee Ki-Youuuuuung! I’m not a demon summoner! *Cough!* All of you are being tricked! He’s the real demon! He’s the real demon!

- Cover his mouth!

- I’m not a demon summoner! I have never summoned a demon, and I have never animated any undead creatures… It wasn’t me! *Cough! Cough!*

- There are some arguments about how it wouldn’t be good for him to be executed right away because the safety of the continent is at stake. The heretic inquisitors are saying that they could extract information about the dark forces that are taking root in the continent and find out the truth behind the incident.

- The situation involves the safety of the continent, so many agencies are opening their own investigation into the matter. The Republic has promised to provide as much support as they could toward the investigation, and the entire continent has all

eyes on the upcoming trial. This is Reporter Kim Sung-Kyeong.

- Next, this is to lift the hearts of those who are being affected by the serious news. The bestselling novel, How the Alchemist and the Genius Swordsman Loves…

“That demon summoner bastard…!”

“That worthless scum! *Ptui!*”

Before the reporter could deliver the next news, the people around were already shouting and cursing. I was sure everyone felt the same. They thought it was absurd how the demon summoner could lie with such a straight face.

“That scummy bastard. What’s there to investigate? He needs to die by the guillotine.”

“*Tsk*, did you see his face in the goddess’ mirror? His eyes were completely red. He looked as if he was ready to beat someone to death! He was like that when he was captured. He emerged after being captured by his own Republican soldiers, and he was screaming so much I actually got scared of him.”

“The problem is that it isn’t just him. It was mentioned that the forces of darkness are hiding everywhere. If I could, I would support them in executing him right away, but if we think about the possibility of obtaining information from him, we can’t just act rashly and execute him directly. The Sacred Democratic Country also expressed that the proper protocols should be followed. They did the same during the Holy Democratic Revolution. Father Lee Ki-Young wants even the scummiest person out there to receive a fair trial, so I can’t believe that they’re making a big fuss about it as if they had no idea about Father Lee Ki-Young’s personality…”

“There’s a reason why he’s called the demon summoner. Anyway, about tomorrow…”

“*Ah*, I’m thinking about hunting. We shouldn’t be lazy when it comes to monster hunting, and the population of monsters increased because the war lasted for such a long time.”

“But you’re not really in the condition to hunt, Saul. Your wounds are still…”

I nodded slowly.

“That’s true. To be honest, even if I do my best, I’m sure I still won’t be of much help Still, I’m sure I’ll be useful someday. I want to rest a bit longer, but just like what the Goddess of Benigoa and Father Lee Ki-Young said, we have to move forward. Father Lee Ki-Young is still working despite his injuries, so I can’t just sit around like this. Anyway, I’ll be heading out first. Thanks for the interesting stories, Nick.”

“Don’t overdo it, Saul.”

“I won’t.”

I slowly opened the door of the pub and saw a familiar yet unfamiliar sight. It hadn’t even been a month since the war ended, but I could already see the difference between prior to the war and postwar. Honestly, I still hadn’t gotten used to seeing elves and dwarves walking around. There were many buildings being built as well, and even the overall atmosphere of this place had changed.

‘It’s a brand-new world.’

“And it’s a great world to live in.”

I smiled to myself.

* * *

“It’s such a great world to live in.”

“R-Right?”

“The rump steak is melting in my mouth.”

“I-It’s m-melting. *Hehehe*.”

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1. Saul’s POV ☜

CHAPTER 417
A GREAT WORLD TO LIVE IN (2)

"I told them not to gather, so why are they here? *Geez,*" I commented.

It seemed like I was criticizing them, but I wasn't actually in a bad mood. When I looked outside while sitting on a chair made of high-quality leather, I saw the denizens praying hard. The number of people in the throng was either the same as when the people gathered for me in Laios or more. If the conditions were right, I was sure the place would be overflowing with people.

It wasn't just Lindel. There was an unimaginable number of people gathered in Castle Rock, Dawan, Celia, and Everia. The Union of Kingdoms were also experiencing something similar, even though they weren't really involved in the incident. We didn't really use the media like what we had done in Laios, so the fact that the people themselves gathered like this meant that my image had improved, so I was happy to see them gathering for me.

'This incident was especially good.'

The climax of the war was still being played in the goddess' mirrors. When the figure enveloped in light started waving his arms, the undead creatures collapsed, and it was basically a miracle in itself. Afterward, the sight of the figure being one with the Goddess Benigoa and telling the people to move forward was so holy that there was no way ordinary people would notice anything strange. Honestly, I looked so holy while bathed in a light that was so dazzling that I got worried that I might go blind.

The denizens of the Sacred Democratic Country had always been devotees of the Benigoa Goddess, so I could already deduce their reactions. I was sure that those who would dare to say that what happened was a fabricated scenario, then that foolish person would definitely get stoned to death.

'Indeed.'

We profited a lot through the miracle, but the war actually left a huge scar on the continent. There were many casualties, and there were also many people who

suffered varying degrees of injuries.

I was also sure that those who got killed by the demon summoner's wicked tricks wouldn't be able to rest peacefully. The mental shock that the cursed undead creatures gave to the entire continent was indescribable. In addition to the casualties, the entire region where the final battle occurred was devastated to the point that it was impossible for it to recover.

The Sacred Democratic Country and the Republic's forces were cut down immensely compared to before. In addition to the production facilities that were destroyed during the war, authoritative restoration mages and famous experts also said that the regions devastated by the war would need at least ten years before they could recover based on the continent's flow of mana.

However, what was really important was the damage that the war inflicted on the people. The war displaced many people, but if it weren't for the war, there was no way the continent would have been able to unite and move forward with one goal.

Many nations decided to abandon the competition and the history of conflicts between them. They decided to prepare for the upcoming threat.

We had to postpone many official announcements because there were still some issues that were currently being negotiated, but it was only a matter of time until the leaders of the continent agreed and gathered as one.

Therefore, it could be said that the miracle in the war had a tremendous effect on the continent.

In that sense, Light Ki-Young was basically at the center of the continent right now. Apart from the advent of the goddess, I stopped the war using everything I had and did a great job in fixing the post-war issues. I also did the right thing by Pardoning all the Republican soldiers and proclaiming that we should all move forward together.

The advent of the Goddess of Benigoa. The son of the Goddess of Benigoa. The agent of the Goddess of Benigoa.

In addition to the many nicknames, there were also some rumors that I was the Goddess of Benigoa's blessing on the continent. I couldn't help but think that they were going too far, but when I recalled how I got rid of the undead creatures with a flick of my hand, I had to agree with them. I actually received a blessing from the

goddess, and I even spoke to her, so the nicknames they gave me were somewhat accurate.

I could say it was thanks to those that my value shot through the sky. The Ki-Young Coin had always been worth a lot, but the price went to the moon once more, so I was sure that the people who didn't invest while it was still early were greatly regretting their decision.

My value definitely increased, and it was evidenced by the fact that the people who were previously hostile to me started showering me with gifts.

As I was smiling, I heard someone knocking, and I saw a familiar face. The person who greeted me while pushing her glasses up with one hand was none other than my personal secretary. Of course, she wasn't really my official secretary, but that was the kind of work she had been doing lately, so it should be fine for me to call her my secretary at this point.

"Miss Kim Mi-Young?" I asked.

"*Ah!* You were eating. I'm sorry," she apologized.

"No, it's fine. I'm almost done, and it's my fault as well. I should have been prepared. As you can see, all I do here is lie down and look outside. You came just in time because I was starting to get bored. Do you have any news? Actually, the schedule later—"

"I do," she replied.

"Please tell me," I requested.

"Okay, Sub Guild Master. I'll tell you the… light news first. *Ahem*. This is the list of the gifts the Republican senators and the nobles all over the continent had sent over here. They're currently stored in the Guild House Storage Room, and among the gifts are catalysts along with an ancient alchemy book from the Repulic's treasury…"

"The Union of the Eastern Congressmen and the President of the Republic also personally sent gifts with messages wishing for your speedy recovery," she said.

"I see."

This was why being powerful was great.

“They also mentioned that they wanted to meet you privately, but…”

“*Ah*, I prefer… not to do that. I’m having difficulties moving around, and I also have to be cautious about how I act because many eyes are on me. Please tell them that I’ll soon contact them about their concern,” I instructed her.

“I’ll let them know,” she said.

“Please tell them as nicely as you can, if possible,” I added.

“Okay.”

“And Miss Oscar also said that she wanted to visit you herself…” Kim Mi-Young continued.

“Please tell her that she doesn’t need to visit me. She’s probably really busy, right? Please tell her that I’m planning on visiting the capital soon, and I also need to visit Father Basel. I’m sure he has a lot of questions—*Ah!* How are the guild members? Deok-Gu and Mr. Hyun-Sung specifically,” I asked.

“Mr. Park Deok-Gu is currently in bed. The treatment seems to be working, so it seems like he’ll recover in a few days, but he’s still unconscious,” she answered.

“*Hm*, that Valentin Alexandro is still in prison, right?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“Please tell Helena, the heretic inquisitor, to take extra good care of him. Actually, I’ll contact her myself. I’m glad that he’s going to recover in a few days, and…” I paused.

“Regarding the Guild Master…” she paused.

“Yes?”

“He has been deeply thinking about something recently. He would either look out the window in a daze or think about something in silence. He hasn’t said anything, but he definitely changed. I don’t think it’s something to be worried about, but I think it wouldn’t hurt if you talk to him,” she suggested.

"*Hm*."

'That guy… '

I couldn't help but start tapping on the armrest upon hearing news about our lovely regressor.

"And…"

I was also getting worried.

'It's all over, so what is he thinking about?'

There was a strange atmosphere when Kim Hyun-Sung came to visit, and it seemed like the Guild House's atmosphere was strange as well. I thought that perhaps he was just feeling a bit uncomfortable, but I didn't think that he would still be spacing out.

However, it wasn't that Kim Hyun-Sung had bad thoughts about the recently concluded war. Actually, he seemed really satisfied with the outcome.

I wasn't sure how chaotic his past life was, but based on his reaction, the forces all over the continent were probably fighting each other back then. I didn't want to assume that he had done something stupid, but… it was highly likely that the forces of the continent were still fighting even after the unknown threat finally surfaced.

In addition to fighting to the death to profit a bit more, I was sure that those forces were corrupted to the core.

'In that sense, I can say that his past life can truly be considered hell on earth.'

However, it could be said that his current life had changed for the better. The masked scum was already out of the picture, and back then, it was all because of the masked scum that his life ended in the worst possible way.

Yes, there was some damage, but it was nothing compared to his past life. If the entire continent was taken into account, it could even be said that no damage was done at all.

Basically, it could be said that the continent was now prepared for the upcoming, unknown threat, so I had no idea why Kim Hyun-Sung was still in a bad mood.

‘Is he thinking that Jin Cheong isn’t the masked scum?’

I found it hard to understand from my point of view, but Kim Hyun-Sung might be thinking that Jin Cheong wasn’t as wicked as the masked scum from his previous life.

I couldn’t figure out Kim Hyun-Sung’s feelings when he finally saw the masked scum, Jin Cheong, showing a pathetic side of him while screaming that he wasn’t a demon summoner. It was only natural that I couldn’t deduce Kim Hyun-Sung’s feelings. After all, the masked scum had always been a thorn in his chest.

In addition to incessantly screaming that he wasn’t a demon summoner, he also got dragged and sold out by his own allies. The attitude he displayed back then made me lose the little respect I had for him.

In other words, the charismatic masked scum from his previous life had been reduced to nothing but an outraged sore loser. In that case, was Kim Hyun-Sung feeling empty or happy? It was definitely the former, and I had no idea why.

I thought about taking care of his mental health, but I didn’t have the luxury to do that because I had too much work on my hands.

‘At least he’s still doing his job, and that’s a good thing.’

Otherwise, the entire Blue Guild would have been struggling right now.

Kim Mi-Young saw me tapping on the armrest while deep in my thoughts, and she waited for me to emerge from my thoughts in silence.

“…”

“…”

“I’m sorry, Miss Kim Mi-Young,” I said, surprised when I saw her staring at me.

“It’s fine. Can I continue, then?” she asked with a smile.

“Yes, please,” I replied.

“It’s an extension of your comment just now about meeting with Father Basel,” she started.

“It should be fine if you schedule a time with him as soon as possible. I should have time… around next week,” I told her.

“Actually, there’s an urgent matter Father Basel wanted to speak to you about,” she said.

“Did something happen to Jin Cheong? Or is it about the trial schedule…” I asked.

“No, it’s nothing like that… I mean… I’m not sure how I should tell you this,” she said hesitantly.

“Go on.”

“The statue of the Goddess of Benigoa is crying tears of blood…” she continued.

“What?”

It was a piece of bad news among the good news.

‘What’s going on?’

I had no idea why, but it seemed that there was a problem.

‘What’s wrong with her?’

My head started hurting.

CHAPTER 418
PROBLEMS FROM ABOVE (1)

My head started hurting.

'Shit. This is making me nervous.'

I wasn't fond of unfamiliar situations.

"Tears of blood?" I said while tapping my thigh nervously.

"Yes. I heard that the Vatican is currently investigating the exact reason behind it, and it hasn't been announced to the public yet. They made the right decision because the denizens will definitely get confused, but…" Kim Mi-Young trailed off.

"I don't think they should announce it. Actually, there's really no proper way to tell people about that," I continued.

"I know you're still recovering, but Father Basel wants you to visit the capital as soon as possible. Maybe today or tomorrow…" she added.

"*Ugh*."

"If you don't want to, I can tell him—"

"No, it's not that I don't want to visit him," I interrupted her.

'I do need to visit him.'

Father Basel himself had requested me to visit him, and the issue involved the Benigoa Goddess, so it would be strange for me not to respond positively. Even if I would find it painful, I had to attend meetings like this. If it were something different, then I could easily ignore it, but the majority of my powers came from the Vatican, so I couldn't just ignore the Vatican and the many powerful figures there.

The problem was that the situation was too heavy for me to just consider it a strange

phenomenon. In addition, it also had something to do with the Sacred Democratic Country.

'Why are you crying tears of blood all of a sudden? Shit…!'

To make things worse, I didn't know that the statue could do something like that, and it made me bitter about the fact that the goddess hadn't been using that kind of method until now.

It was obviously a bad omen, and the reason the Vatican didn't show any other reaction was to prevent confusion among the denizens. It was nothing more than that. If the news were delivered to the public with the wrong information, then there would definitely be widespread confusion.

'Considering Father Basel's hot-tempered nature, I'm sure hellfire is already burning within the Vatican.'

Father Basel was especially kind to me, but even I knew what kind of person he was once he lost his temper. I couldn't help but gulp at the thought of it alone. Actually, I did think that there wouldn't be any issues because gods had a stingy side to them, and they would sometimes do strange things, similar to that Elune scum.

However, I had done something serious recently, so I had no choice but to tread lightly.

After all, I didn't want to be caught red-handed. Of course, I wasn't really a thief, but…

'Just in case… '

It probably wouldn't happen, but just in case…

If someone revealed that the advent of the goddess was fake…

'Things could go wrong.'

Everything I had built up until now would be destroyed in the proverbial blink of an eye. I could be getting ahead of myself, but if the Vatican had already noticed some issues, then there was a chance that they were already investigating me. The goddess statue crying tears of blood was probably just a reason for me to visit the Vatican so

that they could start questioning me there. Of course, this wasn't a serious issue because I could easily prove my innocence and holiness through Benigoa.

However, it would still get a bit annoying if things got worse from here.

'I hope Benigoa isn't trying to backstab me.'

If that were true, then it would be incredibly annoying to deal with it.

There were many priests in the Vatican, but the priests of Benigoa were weaker than the priests of other gods because the priests of Benigoa didn't really have anyone among them who had heard the voice of the Benigoa Goddess before.

However, I was confident that at least one of them heard her voice recently, and using the goddess statue crying tears of blood as the signal, they could be trying to bring me down. It made even more sense considering that I wasn't really influential in my past life. It could be said that my influence back then was just a speck of dust.

Right now, the continent was stable, and the children of the gods were prepared to face the upcoming threat. In that case, it wouldn't be strange if they judged me to be a threat and started beating me up. It was possible that the higher-ups had made plans to get rid of me while my guard was down.

'Did I go too far?'

It was a possibility.

'But I've done so much for them, so they can't treat me this way. Those dirty bastards...!'

I saved the world a few times, helped our lovely regressor, and contributed to bringing the human race together. I accepted the daughter that the Elune scum had abandoned and cleaned up the mess Varian had made. The mess Varian had made had been particularly difficult for me to deal with. I was sure that other people wouldn't even bother dealing with it.

I strengthened the faith of Benigoa's devotees and contributed a lot to creating the strongest church on the continent. I brought glory to her name through sacred democracy and showcased her divinity by dealing with the wicked undead.

Of course, those weren't the end of my contributions. I also punished demons in the

name of the light and saved the denizens of Laios. I resealed the ancient god in the museum and performed risked-based culling by getting rid of all sorts of elements that could become a threat to the future of the continent.

I was the most virtuous person in existence, and I was sure that there wasn't anyone like me.

'And now they want to get rid of me? There's no way that's true. They wouldn't do that while wearing the mask of the gods.'

I was sure that even the 72 Demon Lords wouldn't treat me that way. If anything, they should have given me gifts rather than treating me this way. At the least, they could have just filed an official complaint.

If they were thinking about doing something that not even a demon was wicked enough to do, then I was prepared to make them regret their decision.

'You hear me? You're really going to kick me out like this? You bastards. Do you hear me? If you turn your back on me now, I'll bring you down with me. Got it?'

It was true.

'Do you really think that Kim Hyun-Sung will stand on your side?'

However, I didn't hear any response from the heavens. I wasn't really feeling anxious, but my mood soured. I thought perhaps the reason why Kim Hyun-Sung was suddenly deep in his thoughts was that he had heard bad rumors about me.

'You demonic dogs! Are you really going to treat me like this?'

I couldn't help but think that they had stopped monitoring the continent. I waited for a while, but a forced quest notification didn't appear. There was something wrong. My thoughts earlier were merely suspicions, but now, they were starting to become a certainty.

I waited for someone from up there to drop me a quest while tapping the table in front of me, but there was still nothing but radio silence. In the end, I came up with two possibilities why no one was responding to me.

1. They're experiencing some issues up there.

2. My thoughts were right, and they are about to abandon me.

If it were the former, then I could just say that I misunderstood, but if the gods were really thinking about doing the latter, then I would do everything in my power to make them regret their decision.

I got up slowly.

“Sub Guild Master?” Kim Mi-Young called out in a daze.

“I think it’ll be best if I head to the capital as soon as possible,” I informed her.

“I’ll make the preparations. When do you want to go?” she asked.

“Please make plans so that I can leave tonight. I may seem like I’m not in a hurry, but this is an urgent matter. I think there *really* is a problem at the Vatican,” I replied.

“And the attendants who will accompany you?” she asked.

“I’ll take Jung Ha-Yan, Park Deok—No, Miss Jo Hye-Jin. Additionally, contact Kasugano Yuno and Hee-Ra noona. Include Dialugia and…” I paused.

“Should I contact Miss Elena as well?” she asked.

“Is she in Lindel right now?” I asked.

“Yes. She filled in the application to join the Blue Guild yesterday and became an official member today. Her job hasn’t been decided yet, but—”

“Great, include her as well,” I said, interrupting her.

“Will you be heading to the capital with all of them?” she questioned.

“Yes, and—*hm*… Please send letters to all the guilds in Lindel, including the Black Swan Guild… *Oh*, wait. I think I can write it on my own. Please send this letter to the elves and dwarves and send this one to Miss Han Sora,” I requested.

“Okay.”

“This letter that I’m writing right now is important. If something happens to me in

the capital, then I want you to spread this letter all over the continent through the goddess' mirrors," I said.

"I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean by *something*…"

"If that something really does happen, then you'll know what I'm talking about. If nothing happens, then destroy the letter immediately. It's in case of an emergency, so you don't have to worry so much. And please deliver the list of items I have written over to Dialugia's nest, but be as discreet as possible…"

"What I'm telling you right now should only be between us. Once you head out, don't say anything and don't be too obvious," I warned her.

"O-Of course, Sub Guild Master. B-But… is this…"

"I know what you're thinking, Miss Kim Mi-Young, but… *Haha*. You don't have to worry. I'm just making preparations in case of an emergency. That's it," I assured her.

"T-Then I'll get it done right away, Sub Guild Master," she answered.

"I'll leave it to you," I said.

"Okay."

I felt reassured when I saw Kim Mi-Young walking out while nodding.

'It's nice having a competent person working for me.'

I guarantee that she's way smarter than me, and the reason why things didn't work out well when I first joined was that I was unlucky or I wasn't as selfish. If Kim Mi-Young weren't here, my life in the Blue Guild would have been much harder. It didn't take me long to organize my thoughts again as I watched her leave.

'Should I let Ji-Hye noona know ahead of time?'

If my relationship with the new fake God of Benigoa went wrong, then I needed someone to take on a critical role.

'There's Hyun-Sung as well… '

Lee Ji-Hye was important, but luring our lovely regressor was a priority as well. He was kind of difficult for me to handle, but I was sure I could convince him using our deep relationship. However, I wasn't sure if I should take him with me to the capital.

'He needs constant care… '

Of course, all of this could just be my imagination, but if one of them were true, then I was more than prepared for it. Light Ki-Young would use and abandon people, but he would never be used and abandoned. I had to be always prepared to swing the mace of light at the fallen Goddess of Benigoa and the scums following her.

[Average-ranked Forced Quest has been activated.]

[No, no! This is a misunderstanding… You see, I can explain every—It's a misunderstanding! Miss Benigoa! Please say something! No! It's a misunder— (0/1)]

[The Average-ranked Forced Quest has been canceled due to an unknown reason.]

[Quest Creation has temporarily stopped due to unknown reasons.]

"Swing the mace of light at the fallen gods…"

I could swing it at them until they were satisfied.

CHAPTER 419
PROBLEMS FROM ABOVE (2)

It seemed that messages had popped up, but I didn't have the luxury of worrying about them. It was all because the seed of suspicion in me had already bloomed. They could do their best to stop me, but there was no way they could stop me at this point.

My suspicion could be abated, but I wasn't nice enough to cancel my plan completely.

'Do you really think that I'm that dumb?'

I couldn't trust anything or anyone until I saw them with my own eyes. The messages were one-way messages with an unknown sender. To make things worse, they stopped creating quests for unknown reasons, so of course, they had become less reliable.

[Quest Creation has temporarily stopped due to unknown reasons.]

'Unknown reasons, my ass…!'

There was a chance that they were thinking about backstabbing me after creating an alibi in the form of a so-called issue that they had to resolve. I was sure that the Elune scum could pull off something like that.

He abandoned Elena, who had always been his devoted devotee, so it wouldn't be strange if Benigoa abandoned me as well because they were the same. They were fallen gods who had never valued loyalty or the achievements of their subjects.

They were basically parents who were prepared to backstab their children for their own greed and profit.

'I'll make sure the path to the afterlife is a comfortable one.'

I hated the practice of Goryeojang[1], but I had no choice but to climb the mountain while carrying Benigoa on my back. However, I needed a discreet plan to do that. I

still hadn't pressed the execute button, and I was honestly nervous about the effectiveness of the safety devices I had prepared in case of an emergency.

My opponent was a fallen deity, so I couldn't help but think that my efforts still weren't enough.

It wouldn't take me long to create a separate manual for Lee Ji-Hye while checking the items I possessed, but for now, I had to be capable of protecting myself. I checked on Juliena, who had become quiet after her forceful awakening, and I also inspected my potions with various effects, the legendary-ranked Aegis, and the condition of my weapons in case of an unexpected situation.

On the outside, it looked as if I was preparing for an expedition. Although it was a bit much for a trip to the capital, I felt kind of relieved to see that I had so many things with me.

I even started thinking that I was a native of the continent.

I heard another knocking on the door while I was inspecting my arsenal. I could already deduce the visitor's identity, and I saw a familiar face entering the room with a bright smile.

"Ha-Yan?"

"Did you call for me, oppa?" Jung Ha-Yan asked.

"Wait a bit. I'll be done soon. Did you get the message?" I asked.

"Yes. I-I heard you're going to the capital and that it was urgent…" she replied.

"Yeah, other people will be going with us. You're okay with that, right?" I questioned.

"Yes, o-of course," she stuttered.

"Hee-Ra noona will be going as well. Along with Miss Elena and Miss Hye-Jin," I added.

"…"

She pouted a little. I was sure she heard about who was going, but hearing it directly

from me definitely soured her mood.

“Don’t worry too much. We’re just going to deal with some business there,” I assured her.

“Okay…”

“Do you know who’s my favorite person?” I asked and opened my arms.

“*Ah!*”

She immediately jumped into my arms. The cheesy line I just unleashed made me feel a shiver down my spine from the cringe, but my opponent seemed to be enjoying it.

Keeping my opponent on a leash while letting them hear what they wanted to hear was extremely important if I wanted to control the flow of the battle. Jung Ha-Yan was one of those whom I consider my opponents in a not-so-literal sense. Naturally, Kim Hyun-Sung was one of those people as well.

Jung Ha-Yan was an irreplaceable mage with powers so overwhelming that both humans and gods desired her. I knew I was doing a good job caring for her, but in situations like this, it was important to make her feel touched.

She was doing her tasks well, and the stabilizer called *marriage* eased her temper a lot, so Jung Ha-Yan’s condition right now was at its best. Her self-esteem, which had been at its lowest, also increased tremendously. She had gotten even more powerful, and the marriage proposal also made her grow a lot in the mental department. Jung Ha-Yan matured so much that I didn’t have to make excuses for her.

Honestly, I felt kind of sad when I thought about how I had to put my life on the line to achieve such results, but I loved her mental stability. The journey here was long, but the important part was that Jung Ha-Yan’s mind was extremely stable right now.

“W-what’s going on? Y-You can rest longer if you want. You should stay in bed and…”

“I think something happened at the Vatican. I don’t think it’s really important, but we don’t know what would happen. By the way, you didn’t come with Elena?” I asked.

“She’s preparing to leave with Miss Hye-Jin s-since you said that we would stay there

for a week. The guild staff members are helping them as well. W-Will you be sleeping there in the capital?" she asked.

"Yeah. I think we can borrow a separate building. It'll change depending on the situation. Anyway, let's start heading outside," I suggested.

I wasn't sure why the location of my bedroom was important, but Jung Ha-Yan didn't seem fond of me sleeping at the Vatican. I was able to catch on quickly to things like this, which made me feel anxious and as expected, I saw Jung Ha-Yan holding onto my arm tightly. I felt kind of embarrassed because of her unwillingness to get separated from me, but we had to move because even if I signaled her to stop, she wouldn't step away from me anyway.

We walked for a bit and arrived at the guild's griffon landing area. I saw Jo Hye-Jin leading the griffons outside the farm and Elena watching a few steps behind her. When Elena saw me, she waved and smiled brightly toward me, but her smile disappeared when she saw Jung Ha-Yan.

Meanwhile, Jo Hye-Jin greeted me by nodding as usual.

'Oh, man… '

Elena looked sad for some reason, and the way she bit her lips made me scared that she was going to explode. I believed that the weak-hearted Elena wouldn't show the same behavior as the old Jung Ha-Yan, but there was a chance that she had an unknown side. The Everia Kingdom opposed her decision, but she still came here. As such, it could be said that she was hiding something.

To be honest, she could be considered my comrade. She could sleep peacefully because ignorance was bliss, but she was my senior when it came to being abandoned by the fallen gods. She was no different from a ballistic missile that was ready to fire a missile of despair toward the heavens once she found out that she had been abandoned. Elena could become useful later on for the press, so I had to take special care of her.

I waved back while smiling lightly, and I saw her greeting me with a sad smile. When I thought about how the pitiful Elena was abandoned by that Elune scum, I couldn't help but get angry at the beings up above.

'How could he abandon such a poor and innocent elf…!'

Of course, I didn't say anything. I wasn't sure whether Elena knew my thoughts or not because she just greeted me hesitantly.

"Do I call you Sub… Guild Master?" Elena asked.

"You don't have to do that, Miss Elena. There's no need to be so formal, *haha*," I replied.

"*Ah*…"

"It's true that you're a guild member, but because of your status, treating you like an ordinary guild member is a bit—"

"You don't need to give me special treatment. Please…" she interrupted.

"No, I'm not trying to give you special treatment. The Blue Guild isn't a very formal guild, and… we're all close to each other. I'm also trying my best not to be so formal with the other party members and with Mr. Hyun-Sung. You can act like your usual self, Miss Elena. Anyway, I know it's late, but welcome to the Blue Guild. I am looking forward to working with you," I explained.

"No, I should be the one saying that. I am looking forward to working with you, Mr. Lee Ki-Young. And… Miss Jung Ha-Yan," she said.

"Y-Yes… I am looking forward to working with you as well. A-A-And welcome to the Blue Guild…" Jung Ha-Yan stuttered.

"Thank you."

"Are we done with the preparations, Miss Hye-Jin?" I asked.

"Yes, Sub Guild Master. We can leave as soon as Miss Cha Hee-Ra arrives. Miss Dialugia will be joining us later, and Miss Kasugano Yuno said that she'll meet us at the capital," Jo Hye-Jin replied.

"I see. Well done," I complimented her.

"I was only doing my job," she commented.

It was nice that she knew how to get things done as fast as possible. The fact that

Hee-Ra noona was coming with us was also worthy of a celebration. I couldn't help but start thinking about her, but she finally arrived with her signature red hair. She was definitely the Cha Hee-Ra that I knew from the number of attendants next to her.

"It's been a while, darling. Actually, it hasn't been that long since I saw you a few days ago," Cha Hee-Ra greeted.

We spoke right after the war ended, but for some reason, it felt like it had been a long time since we met. Her usual messy red hair reminded me of a lion with a red mane, but she had dark circles beneath her eyes.

"Are you sick?" I asked.

"It's frustration," she answered.

"…"

"…"

"You don't have to worry. You know that I'm a bit tired for quite some time now. Just consider it an aftereffect. It's been a really long time since I lost consciousness, and I feel like it's getting worse recently. I'm still not used to it. Shit. It's ten times worse than having a hangover. I shouldn't have worn it," she explained.

"You mean the berserker set?" I asked.

"You saw it?" she asked.

"No, I heard about it. You were apparently wearing armor and holding a weapon. Were they Legendary items?" I asked.

"That's right," she replied.

"Can I see them?" I asked.

"Do you really want to see them?" she questioned.

"No…"

"Good choice because I don't really want to show them to you. By the way… why did

you call us out here? You're pretty armed for this to be a mere picnic. Did you discover a dungeon inside the capital or something?" Cha Hee-Ra asked.

"No, it's nothing like that. Just think of it as being thoroughly prepared for anything," I replied.

"I'm sure you prepared everything, but… if possible, I'd like to take a long break. A long one. Don't you agree, darling?" she asked with an exhausted smile.

Her smile definitely reflected her exhaustion, but the glare in her eyes betrayed her tiredness. She wasn't threatening me, but I felt like a herbivore in front of a carnivore. No, I wasn't imagining it. The way she looked at me from head to toe made her look like a beast inspecting its prey.

Jung Ha-Yan pulled on my clothes…

'Please don't be like this, guys… '

I knew better than anyone what would happen once these two went head-to-head. It ended well last time, but there was no guarantee that it would end the same way this time. In the end, I had no choice but to speak cautiously.

"It's important to take a long break. *Oh*, look at the time. Let's hop on the griffon. You, Ha-Yan, and Miss Elena should ride together. I'll ride with Miss Hye-Jin, is that okay? What do you think, Miss Hye-Jin?" I asked.

"…"

"…"

"…"

"Hurry up and get on the griffon, Miss Hye-Jin," I urged her.

"…"

"Hurry…!"

"I don't think I'm comfortable with this arrangement, Sub Guild Master," Jo Hye-Jin commented.

“I feel the same way, so just get on,” I told her.

After she got on, I grabbed her waist tightly. The three women seemed surprised, but they didn’t look like they were jealous. However, I couldn’t help but be glad that I wasn’t with the three women when I saw them ride on the griffon together.

“Don’t grab me too tight, Sub Guild Master. It’s uncomfortable,” requested Jo Hye-Jin.

The three women looked hurt for some reason.

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1. An ancient practice of abandoning an aged parent by leaving one's old parent alive in a pit, which becomes his/her grave after death. Editor here, it’s funny but take a look at the wikipedia page of Goryeojang, specifically at the director’s name xD ☜

CHAPTER 420
PROBLEMS FROM ABOVE (3)

Beautiful scenery would eventually become boring, and it was what I felt at the sight of the scenery we passed by on the way to the capital. The mountains, cities, villages, and rivers became rather dull in my eyes.

Honestly, the scene I saw upon arriving at the capital was much better.

“Father Lee Ki-Young!”

“The Avatar of the Goddess!”

“The blessing of the Goddess of Benigoa!”

Obviously, I waved toward the denizens shouting at me from afar. I wanted to get off at the entrance and shake their hands, but it was sad that I couldn’t do that because of the urgent situation I had to handle.

“Hold on tight; we’re almost there,” Jo Hye-Jin said.

“Okay.”

“I don’t feel too comfortable with your tight grip on my waist. Please refrain from excessive physical contact,” she requested.

‘What do you want me to do, then?’

“I’m sorry,” I apologized.

“…”

“…”

While I was stewing in disappointment, the griffon finally landed on the former imperial palace’s grounds. The Imperial Palace of the Imperial Family had been

converted into the residence of the Sacred Democratic Country's leader, Oscar.

I could already see people who had come out to greet us—Senator Caitlyn, Senator Elise, Marilyn, and Oscar. I wasn't sure if this was the right way to describe it, but it felt like Father Lee Ki-Young was finally returning to high society.

I also saw Kasugano Yuno, who arrived before us from Celia. People whom I consider to be important connections of mine had also been waiting for us to arrive.

"Father Lee Ki-Young."

"It's been a while, Miss Oscar. You didn't have to come out to greet me…" I told her.

"No, it's only right for me to come out and greet you. You're the hero who saved the continent, after all. Are you alright?" Oscar asked.

"I'm still recovering, but it isn't to the point that I can't move at all. I'm sorry that it has taken me so long to come here," I replied.

"No, I should be the one who should apologize. I'd like to serve you some tea first, but…" she paused.

"I'll visit after I'm done with my tasks," I said.

Oscar, formerly Aris the maid, brightened up. My comment about visiting her after my work was done definitely sounded sweet to her.

'She's still the same… '

Aside from her hairstyle that changed into a bob cut, she was still the same Aris I was familiar with, and of course, I also knew that she wasn't just being hospitable when she offered to serve me some tea. As such, I smiled brightly at her.

I had to leave a good impression of everyone ahead of time so that if something untoward happened, I could take advantage of the good impression everyone had on me.

'There's really no need for me to take it that far, but… '

Oscar and I were pretty close, and it was obvious seeing that I was the one who put

her in her position in the first place. Of course, she wasn't the only one with a good relationship with me.

"Senator Caitlyn, Senator Elise, and Lady Marilyn! It's been a while," I greeted.

"It seems like as time passes, it's getting harder to see you, Father Lee Ki-Young. *Hehe*," Senator Caitlyn commented.

"*Haha*, why did your words sound like it has an underlying meaning, Senator Caitlyn? I'm sorry if I haven't been able to visit. I don't really have that much free time recently," I said.

"My words have no underlying meaning at all. We know better than anyone that you're doing a lot for the Democratic Country. Please consider it as a mistake I made out of longing. I was just missing you a lot," she explained.

"You have no idea how much I missed having tea time with all of you. I kept thinking about you all while I was in the hospital," I commented.

"Really, Father Lee Ki-Young?" Lady Marilyn asked.

"Of course, Lady Marilyn," I replied.

"I'm sure it's the same for Senator Marilyn, Father Lee Ki-Young. Every time we meet, she talks about you a lot. A tad bit too much, honestly," Senator Caitlyn remarked.

"Really?" I asked.

"S-Sentor Caitlyn…!" Lady Marilyn exclaimed.

"See? Look at her blush!" Senator Caitlyn pointed out.

"*Haha*," I laughed.

Lady Marilyn was still acting like she was in a romantic comedy movie shot in the 80s, and the way Senator Caitlyn and Senator Elise reacted to her behavior made me think that the latter two hadn't changed as well.

The only difference I could see—if I were to nitpick—was the fact that their etiquette as nobles was almost gone, and I couldn't help but be proud of them. After all, it was

always admirable for people to adapt to the changing times.

Afterward, I turned around and greeted Kasugano Yuno and the others from Celia.

“It’s nice to see you again.”

“Yes, mas—I mean, Father Lee Ki-Young. Have you been well?” Yuno asked.

I formally greeted the others. I patted their shoulders and shared short and useless conversations with them before wishing them the best. My modus operandi when it came to maintaining my connections with them was still the same as well.

Cha Hee-Ra also started greeting the others, and while all this was going on, Jung Ha-Yan was staring quietly at Kasugano Yuno. It was probably because she recalled the incident from a long time ago. I gulped at the thought, but after seeing Jung Ha-Yan standing with confidence, I was finally able to breathe normally once again.

“By the way, Father Lee Ki-Young, how come you’re here at such short notice?” Oscar asked.

“*Haha*, I actually have business at the Vatican,” I replied.

“The Vatican?” she asked.

“Yes. I can’t tell you the details, but…” I paused.

“Seems like there’s a problem,” she commented.

“I’m sure it’s nothing serious, Miss Oscar. It’s nothing you need to concern yourself over,” I told her.

“I did get the feeling that the Vatican is experiencing some issues recently… I can’t be heavily involved since it’s an internal issue, but the atmosphere seemed heavy. Even His Holiness seemed to be filled with worry recently… Could you tell him that if he needs help, he can ask me anytime?” she requested.

“Of course. I’m sure Father Basel will gladly accept your help. Sometime today, there might be an official announcement,” I answered.

“Okay…”

'Is he keeping it a secret even from her?'

I could somewhat understand his decision because the church and the state were separate in the Sacred Democratic Country.

'I'm sure she has a lot on her mind as well.'

I could deduce Oscar's thoughts from the way her partner had been pacing anxiously. I could also deduce that Father Basel was worried, even though he was doing a good job keeping calm.

Oscar said that it wasn't her business, but I could see that she was uncomfortable.

I started walking slowly and saw people approaching from afar. Father Basel was approaching me along with the holy knights.

'Why are there so many of them?'

Of course, they were just ordinary holy knights, but at this point, I couldn't help but be suspicious of those holy knights as well. I believed that it wasn't anything serious, but I had always been the type to think of the worst-case scenario. I started worrying about useless things. Obviously, there was no reason for me to worry about them at this point.

After all, even if something untoward happened…

'I have enough power.'

There was no reason to make things worse by looking anxious, and right now, acting like my usual self would be more beneficial to me. I smiled brightly, and Father Basel smiled brightly as well. I wasn't sure whether his smile was genuine or fake, but the suspicion in my heart was diminished ever so slightly. If Father Basel's smile was genuine, then it meant that the Vatican wasn't actively trying to get rid of me.

"Father Basel!"

"Father Lee Ki-Young!"

The way he shouted with such vigor was a surprise to me. He sounded like a sad baby bird waiting for its mother. Honestly, I was sure that even Romeo's voice didn't

sound as emotional as he watched Juliet die.

Father Basel's voice was filled with relief and longing. Of course, I could understand that he had been missing me since it had been a while since we saw each other. However, his reaction was better than I had expected, so I was relieved.

'Nice.'

Father Basel picked up the pace, and the holy knights around him started walking faster as well. When I saw him up close, I realized that he had lost a lot of weight. He still looked clean, but I was sure that he hadn't been able to sleep peacefully recently.

It had only been a week since we moved that Jin Cheong scum to the capital, but he already looked drastically different compared to what he looked just a week ago. To make things worse, he was crying, so it was clear that he had been suffering.

I gripped his hands tightly, and I felt like a grandson finally realizing that his grandfather was growing weaker as time went on, and it was amusing, but he greeted Oscar and the others while holding my hand.

His behavior was definitely odd, considering how Father Basel was the type of person who was meticulous enough not to make a rookie mistake like this. As such, my heart broke because his odd behavior proved that he had truly suffered a lot recently.

"You did a lot, Father Lee Ki-Young. I was worried because I couldn't visit you in Lindel…" Father Basel said.

"It's nothing for you to worry about, Father Basel. My condition is better than what people have been told. I would have felt more uncomfortable if you really came to Lindel," I told him.

"Is that right? *Ah*, that's understandable since you're the type to think that way. I'm glad you're here, Father Lee Ki-Young," he said.

"Since it's an issue within the Vatican, it's my issue as well, so I can't just stand by and watch, can I? I'm sure you're worried a lot," I said.

"You're right. By the way, have you heard the Goddess of Benigoa's voice recently?" he asked.

“Recently, yes… but I never imagined something that like this would happen. We should hurry and check out the situation rather than just standing here, Father Basel,” I suggested.

“You’re right. We don’t have time to stand around here like this. Let’s get going,” he agreed.

“Okay.”

We moved quickly, and my precious guards came with me. I let my guard down a bit after seeing Father Basel’s reaction, and if possible, it was best for us to move together.

The holy knights weren’t stopping us, so Father Basel had to have allowed the others to enter with me.

‘So he still trusts me that much. Not bad.’

“Father Basel, could you tell me exactly when the strange phenomenon happened?” I asked.

“Yes, it happened around 2 AM two days ago. A priest praying at the goddess statue discovered it first, and I saw the goddess crying ten minutes later. I feel ashamed for saying this, but I still haven’t figured out why this is happening. The heretic inquisitors and the priests above bishops are doing their best to look for clues, but…” he paused.

“…”

“We haven’t made any progress at all. The main chapel where the statue is located has been sealed. Only bishop-level priests can enter, and to prevent the rumors from spreading, we’ve been moving cautiously, but we can only do so much,” he continued.

‘He had no choice.’

Access to the main chapel was restricted, and the priests that were of bishop level and higher looked like they were deeply disturbed about something. It wasn’t strange that priests below the bishop level weren’t privy to the information.

As we continued walking, I started seeing priests with serious faces, and the deeper

we walked into the path to the main chapel, the heavier the atmosphere became. I broke out into a cold sweat because the heavy atmosphere was starting to disturb me.

We eventually arrived at the main doors of the main chapel, and when it opened with Father Basel at the helm, I saw a ridiculous sight.

'Why is she crying?'

I couldn't help but stare agape at the strange and grotesque phenomenon.

'Can I use that as a catalyst?'

Mind's Eye was telling me that it could be used as a catalyst.

CHAPTER 421
PROBLEMS FROM ABOVE (4)

[Goddess of Benigoa's Sorrowful Tears of Blood - Semi-Mythic]

[The tears of a goddess. A Semi-Mythic catalyst.]

'I think I can use it.'

The details weren't really there, so I couldn't figure out how it was supposed to be used, but I knew that it could be used, at the very least. I expected it to be Mythic, but it seemed that the system recognized the tears as the tears of the goddess statue rather than the tears of the goddess herself. However, I couldn't help but think that the system was stingy.

'It means that I need to torture Benigoa to get a Mythic item.'

It was a bit unfortunate, but finding an item at a place like this would be considered a stroke of luck. I obviously wanted to grab the catalyst that was still rolling down the statue's cheek. If Father Basel and the others weren't here, I would have stuck right next to that statue until it cried.

"Oh, goddess…!"

Father Basel exclaimed before I could examine the statue. I was here with him, so I could see that he was truly heartbroken. I understood how he felt. Father Basel was one of the most faithful priests in the Vatican, and he actually had the purest faith out of all priests here. I was sure that he had experienced many political fights and conflicts, but there was a reason why he was in his position.

The crying statue and his distressed look made the atmosphere even gloomier and heavier. Of course, I was sure that he wouldn't look that sad if the goddess weren't crying.

Benigoa's overall appearance was gorgeous. I didn't know if she looked exactly like that statue, but she would be considered beautiful no matter where she went. The one thing that was a bit unusual about her was that she looked dejected for some reason, and since she was crying tears of blood, it really looked as if the goddess was sad.

"*Heuuuk*! Oh, goddess…!"

It wasn't just Father Basel. The priests above bishop level gathered here released groaned. I acted like I was praying, but I immediately looked around because I was worried that a different phenomenon was going to appear from that statue.

'Goddess Benigoa, we're still close, right? You're not trying to backstab me, right?'

I still couldn't hear her answer. I swept my gaze across the figures gathered in this chapel, and I didn't notice anything suspicious about them. In that case, it seemed that what they said about the crying statue was true, and they didn't bring me here to backstab me according to the Benigoa Goddess' orders.

I thought it would be safe for me to say that they made the decision to bring me here because they had no idea what was causing the statue to cry. It was still too early to come to a conclusion, but I thought I could let go of the delusion that Benigoa went crazy and became a fallen goddess. It was a bit of a waste, but I guess it wasn't that bad.

"W-What do you think, Father Lee Ki-Young? The goddess' voice…" Father Basel asked.

"*Hm*…"

'What should I tell him?'

I wanted to lie with confidence while nodding, but I shook my head instead. However, if I mention that I realized something, I was sure that I would be able to see how the Vatican would react.

'I need time to organize my thoughts.'

Naturally, I shook my head while biting my lips, and Light Ki-Young could easily reveal an expression similar to someone who had lost everything. When I started

talking, I felt everyone looking at me.

“I don’t hear her voice. I don’t hear… the goddess’ voice.”

“*Huh…*”

“A-Actually… I think I have an idea as to why Goddess Benigoa is showing that side of herself. However, I think it’s still too early for me to talk about it thoughtlessly…” I continued.

“What is it?!” Father Basel yelled.

‘He responded immediately.’

He looked like a traveler who had found an oasis after getting lost in the desert for over ten days.

‘He’s not acting.’

I kept thinking about this a while ago, but I became certain after seeing Father Basel’s face. He was begging me to tell him, so it was proof that Benigoa hadn’t fallen just yet.

“I’m sorry, Father Basel, but…” I paused.

“Please tell us, Father Lee Ki-Young,” he begged.

“…If you don’t mind, could you give us a moment? I’d like to be with the goddess…” I requested.

“Of course. W-We’ll do that. Yes! What are you doing? Hurry up and leave! Father Lee Ki-Young said he wants to examine the goddess’ condition. I want everyone to leave the chapel! H-How long do you need, Father Lee Ki-Young?” he asked.

“It could take some time. Don’t worry too much and wait for me, Father Basel. I’ll put everything on the line and find out exactly what the goddess wants,” I replied.

“I leave it to you, Father Lee Ki-Young,” he said.

‘I got it, so let go of my hand. It hurts… ’

“If you need anything, let me know anytime. Anything!” he added.

“I’ll let you know,” I told him.

“I’m *so* relieved that you’re here. Really…” he commented.

“It’s nothing, Father Basel.”

‘I got it, so leave already. I’m getting a headache.’

“Please find out what’s happening no matter what!” he requested again.

‘Just leave already…!’

It was ridiculous how he begged me while holding both of my hands, and after a while, I saw everyone leaving the chapel. Jung Ha-Yan, Cha Hee-Ra, and my other insurance looked at me as if they were asking if it was really okay for them to leave. I felt kind of nervous, but when I nodded that it was okay, they left with Father Basel.

I wondered how those women would spend their time in the interim, but this was more urgent than that.

‘Of course, I need to do my job.’

My thoughts were complicated, but I had to do the task I was given. After taking out the alchemist kit I always carried around with me, I set it at the place where I thought the tears of blood were going to fall.

‘Nice.’

The empty glass bottle that was catching the falling tears looked lovely, and I was sure it would be filled in an hour or two.

“I’m sure she’s not crying just to give this to me as a gift… Did something really happen to her?” I mumbled.

I thought hard about it, but I couldn’t find any reason for her to stumble upon issues.

‘It’s not like they’re at war with demons… ’

“And I’m sure she’s not locked up somewhere as well,” I said.

Assuming that everything I had achieved could be considered the Goddess of Benigoa’s achievements as well, then she should be shouting with joy right now.

Wait, this could actually be tears of joy rather than tears of sadness. She could be shedding bloody tears of joy because I managed to unify the human race and brought the continent out of danger.

I knew that this was ridiculous, but I couldn’t help but think that she could be out there having fun at a party, and that was the reason why I couldn’t hear any responses from her.

‘She’s being negligent… ’

The chances that she was out partying were low, but if I didn’t hear her explanation about why her statue was crying tears of blood, then there was no way for me to explain myself to the others.

Since I couldn’t figure it out, I had no choice but to come up with my own conclusion. Of course, I had to make an excuse to calm Father Basel down first, along with the other high-ranked priests.

‘I think I can use the demon excuse again… ’

It was an outdated idea, but it was better than nothing.

The goddess had told everyone to get rid of the servants of demons hidden all over the continent, so if I told them that the demons were gnawing away at the integrity of the continent, then it should be convincing enough.

After all, even the heavens would be concerned if the integrity of the continent itself was being harmed. Moreover, I was actually planning on targeting the people I wanted to disappear aside from Jin Cheong. Of course, my targets were those uncooperative…

“They all have a connection to the demons, and I have no choice but to do this for the future of the continent…” I muttered.

The uncooperative people of the Sacred Democratic Country, the Magic Kingdom, the

Republic, and the bastards who did nothing but watch as the war progressed.

There was a saying about how being neutral was the worst, and those who didn't make a choice had to pay the price. Of course, I wasn't really going to turn everyone into my enemies. It was useless to make a scene right before a great war, so I could just single out a few people who should take the most responsibility.

A senior mage of the Magic Kingdom, Mediliv. He had always been rambling on about the equilibrium of the world or whatever, but the so-called Magic Tower where he was living was actually…

"The Demon Spire… That was close. I almost got tricked by demons," I said.

The General of the Republic who started the war…

"The servant of the 72nd Demon Commander and the accomplice of the 72nd Demon Commander. I can't give them a chance," I mumbled.

I had to single out many people within the Magic Kingdom because they didn't participate in the war.

A demon was living in Demon Canyon as a Canyon Manager, and the Lord of the Strait was polluting the sea and managing the servants of demons…

There were many people whom I had to beat up as a group rather than as individuals. It would be heartbreaking to see capable soldiers disappear, but they wouldn't be of much help even if they stayed here. After all, I had no idea when they would backstab me, and I couldn't just let them go since they were a threat to the world.

I had the justification, so it wouldn't be a bad idea to take advantage of it and get rid of them all.

I started nodding at my own thoughts because even I thought that I had a reasonable excuse and justification. The mission to get rid of all those with connections with demons across the continent couldn't be done in a day or two, so I could drag it out by coming up with excuses. I was sure Father Basel would completely understand my reasoning. I started making a list of everyone with connections with demons.

'I can just tell them that I got the information from Jin Cheong.'

If I created a story saying that he ratted out everyone who had a connection with demons, I could create a pretty convincing story.

'It's fine, it's fine… '

It would surely create problems up there, but there wouldn't be any problems down here. I was actually happy that things were working out better than I expected. I started feeling thankful, so when I patted the goddess statue…

"You really do look dejected," I commented.

[Please. *Heuuuk.* Please… Master… Please…]

"What?"

[Can you hear me? Can you hear me? Lee Ki-Young, you bastard! *Heuuuung…]*

"What the?"

[I asked if you can hear me!]

"I can…"

[What a relief… I'm glad. I'm really, really glad. Thank you. Thank you very much. Father Lee Ki-Young. Our lovely Father Lee Ki-Young! I didn't abandon you. I never thought about doing that. Never, ever! I had my reasons. I'll explain it all, so don't do anything stupid. Don't do anything weird, and let's just continue living like this. Don't do anything dumb, no matter what!]

'What's going on… '

When I lifted my hand off the statue, I couldn't hear her voice anymore. I was curious as to why she resorted to this kind of method when there was an easier way to communicate with me. I placed my hand on the statue once again, and I could hear her voice again.

[I like you. I never thought about betraying you. Yeah, never. I never thought of you as a bad person or a bastard. We're close, after all. So let's not do anything that'll cause harm to each other. Benigoa, the fallen goddess. That's not true. I have never fallen, and I have never made the continent into my enemy. You'll reconsider it, right?]

I nodded slowly, but the goddess wouldn't stop talking about mundane things. After a while, Benigoa was finally done commenting about my fallen god plan, and she finally addressed the elephant in the room.

[I… went bankrupt.]

CHAPTER 422
PROBLEMS FROM ABOVE (5)

[I… went bankrupt…]

'What do you mean you went bankrupt?'

[I… went b-bankrupt so… I have nothing… and that's why I keep… crying… That's what happened. It's not what you think. I haven't fallen… *Heuuuk!* So please don't proceed with your plan.]

I wasn't sure if this could be considered useful information, but I was kind of happy because my assumption was somewhat correct.

A demon's performance was evaluated based on their contracts, while gods and goddesses would be evaluated based on the people's faith in them. What she meant when she said that she went bankrupt wasn't in the monetary sense. It was more like she lost a ton of holy power.

[That's right.]

'How could you lose all of your holy power? I don't understand. Did you splurge or something?'

[What? Y-You bastard! You scummy bastard! How could you say something like that?]

'…'

[No, no. I shouldn't act like this… I'm sorry. I'm really sorry… Father Lee Ki-Young, you know you're my favorite devotee, right? I haven't fallen, so please don't proceed with your plan.]

'…'

The way she got angry and comforted me right away made me feel like I was dealing with a bipolar psycho, and I could definitely say that she had fallen based on her

behavior. However, it seemed that a part of her mind was still intact. Anyway, what I was most curious about was why she was contacting me through this method. I thought she needed holy power when creating a quest, but I had never imagined that she would go extremely broke to the point that she couldn't even create quests anymore.

"…"

[…]

Of course, I didn't really have to think about it because the one who could give me the answer to my question was standing right in front of me.

"Oh, Goddess Benigoa! Do you know what this humble believer of yours wants to know?" I asked.

[Basic… quests have already been decided. For example, job-change quests and quests you receive whenever you enter a dungeon are managed by the system. Forced Quests and quests sent to individuals are different. We sent those using our own holy power, and they consume an immense amount of holy power. A god cannot interfere with human conflict. That's the rule, and Forced Quests violate that rule. Of course, the amount of holy power consumed differs depending on the content and the difficulty of the quest. It's the same for the reward after a Forced Quest is completed.]

'That's good information.'

[I already exhausted all of my holy power, and the holy power I borrowed from others—I already used them all up as well. I used them all up for my favorite devotee, Lee Ki-Young… *Kgh*… the honorary… *Whoo*… cardinal.]

"It sounds like you're saying that I'm the reason you went bankrupt. That's not true, right?" I asked.

[O-Of course… it's all my fault. All of it… A-Anyway, that's the reason why I can only communicate through this method. I can't create a Forced Quest, so this is the only way.]

"There are other gods aside from you. There's the Elune scum… I think you should have been able to communicate with me through the other gods… It was just

temporary, yes, but I want to know why you stopped communicating with me."

[I-I can explain! It's the same for the others managing this continent. Elune, Varian, and the other gods all went bankrupt. It's because I borrowed holy power from them. There were too many situations where I had no other choice… Yeah… even externally… things… didn't work out. We got caught by the bad guys…]

'Are you managing the continent by pulling things out of your ass or something?'

[It's nothing like that, m-my proud Father Lee Ki-Young. And what you said is bl-blasphemy…]

She was denying it, but I couldn't help but think that it was true.

How were they managing the continent that it ended up in this state? I would understand it if Benigoa were the only one who went bankrupt, but the news about how every god had gone bankrupt was shocking.

I wasn't sure if this was the appropriate example, but this continent was like a workshop for the beings up in the heavens. They obtained holy power through this continent, and they used that holy power to manage it, so of course, they had to use a ton of holy power. They had to keep the demons in check and deal with nature. Not only that, but if part of the holy power that the priests could wield was the god's holy power, then it made a lot of sense.

Additionally, the continent already had a reasonable amount of people, so the population wouldn't increase so easily. Of course, there were many things on the continent that produced holy power for them to acquire, but there was a limit. Despite knowing that holy power was finite, everyone was splurging, so this miserable ending was inevitable.

Benigoa was really crying in grief, but to be honest, this was her fault.

'I can already see where this is going… '

I wasn't sure if the heavens had a similar concept, but if the heavens were compared to the human realm, then what happened between Benigoa, Elune scum, and Varian had to be like this… Benigoa borrowed holy power from Elune scum and Varian. Eventually, she got the gods from the other kingdoms involved, and the gods of the continent ended up signing a contract. In accordance with the contract, Benigoa

borrowed and spent the holy power of external beings.

I was sure she was enjoying an extravagant life before because she had a boundless amount of holy power, but her extravagant life apparently lasted only for a moment because the holy power she borrowed from external beings was starting to become a problem. She was now facing an issue with the IMF of the heavens.

At last, I finally somewhat understood why Benigoa was being kind to me.

'She's worried that her cash cow is going to fail. Amazing. Just amazing.'

I was sure that she was receiving a steady stream of holy power. However, her followers would definitely decrease the moment I talked about how she had become a fallen goddess after being tainted by evil.

In addition, rioters would definitely destroy her statue as a goddess and label her as the goddess of evil. This would only happen if I were to proceed with the fallen Benigoa plan, and even if only half of my plan ended up working out, I would still be a threat to her because she was currently broke to the point that she couldn't even create a quest anymore.

I wasn't sure what would happen if the gods completely lost their holy power, but what would happen was definitely bad, no matter how hard I thought about it.

Either they would outright disappear, or they would fall from the heavens…

"Am I right?"

[…]

"My, my… our Goddess Benigoa must be really exhausted right now," I commented.

[This is why a quick-witted dog…]

"What did you say?" I asked.

[No… I-It's nothing, Father Lee Ki-Young. The majority of your thoughts are true, but I have always been kind to you.]

"You weren't kind to me in the beginning, Goddess Benigoa." I pointed out.

[T-T-That was Elune. Elune was in charge of you, and we changed places in the middle of it. I don't know the details, and I couldn't do anything about it either. Think about it, my lovely son, Father Lee Ki-Young! Think about the things I had done for you. I gave you the Light Bomb Potion, a Semi-Mythic job, and many other things! I have no reason to dislike you. With your help, my followers exponentially increased, and you did your best for me as well. We're a team. E-Elune was in charge of you in the beginning. Really! That Elune scum was in charge of you!]

"He really is a hopeless scum," I commented.

[I… think that way about him sometimes. He even abandoned his daughter. I never abandon my children, especially people like you. Have I ever disappointed you? We're a team, after all.]

I wasn't sure if Elune was really the one who had been managing me from the start but based on his scummy resume, he was more than capable of abandoning people.

[Rumors about Elune are bad anyway. It's not good to get involved with him, Father Lee Ki-Young. I have…]

"No, I'll go first," I said.

[Okay… go ahead. My proud…]

"This isn't the first time that you talked to me, but it had always been one-sided. Now, you can talk to me, and I can respond to you. I have many burning questions to ask, so I'll go straight to the point. My first question is—where are you right now? Are you in this goddess statue?" I asked.

[Yes and no. To be exact, I'm not bere. My main body is still up here, but… it's difficult to explain in a way that humans would understand.]

"Oh, yeah?"

[Where are you touching, you bastard?!]

"You said you weren't here…"

[A part of me is hidden. A-A part… part… of me is hidden here. It's because of the bastards who are pressuring me to pay them back, you bas—I mean, our lovely

Father Lee Ki-Young.]

“You should’ve told me that from the start. Anyway, I don’t think you can feel anything from this statue. By the way, is this what you really look like?” I asked.

[I look similar to it… It’s made from the memories of the sculptor who saw me in his dream. Was that your second question?]

“No, I was just curious. You’re prettier than I thought,” I told her.

[I-I hear that often… B-But you shouldn’t say things like that. It’s blasphemy.]

“*Hm*… Anyway, this is my second question. What happens to humans after they die?” I asked.

[What?]

“I asked what happens to humans after they die. I’m really curious. Imagine yourself meeting a transcendent being you had no idea about. I’m sure even you’ll want to ask,” I explained.

[…]

“…”

[Don’t get me wrong and listen carefully, Father Lee Ki-Young. I’m talking in the name of Benigoa, but… even I don’t know the answer to that.]

“What?” I asked.

[I don’t really know what happens to humans. That’s not part of my jurisdiction. There are things we can say and things we can’t. It means that there are things that are top secret and things that aren’t. But that… that doesn’t fall into any of those. I have no idea about that. It’s the same for when all living things die. I don’t know what happens when we all disappear. I don’t know if you trust me, but I hope you do.]

“I trust you.”

[Really?]

“Really. I wasn’t expecting to hear an answer anyway, and I had a feeling you didn’t know. Anyway, you can tell me top-secret information, right?” I asked.

[I can’t. It’d be nice if I could, but I’m not allowed to tell anyone top-secret information. Even if I talk about it, there’s no guarantee that you’ll hear my voice.]

“Damn it. That means you can’t tell me anything.”

[It depends on the question. What are you curious about?]

“…”

[…]

“What’s the reason for bringing us here?” I asked.

[…]

“I’m not criticizing you because I’m really satisfied with my current life. I’m just curious,” I added.

[That’s not top-secret information, but it’s something I can’t tell you the details about. To be exact, we’re not the ones who dragged you here. The ones who dragged you here handed you guys to us, and we just accepted it.]

“What are you talking about? You mean people on Earth handed us to you?” I asked.

[I can’t tell you the details, but it’s true. I know it’s difficult to accept, and I know that it’s cruel for foreigners, but the tutorial dungeons are made for the process of accepting humans. There’s also nothing we can do about it since we can’t accept every human. We acknowledge that it’s a violent method, but it’s not something we can decide. I swear on my name that we had no choice. I’m sorry, but that’s all I can tell you. I can’t tell you… why or how things are progressing.]

“Because it’s top secret, right?” I asked.

[I’m really sorry.]

“About what?”

[About how you got abandoned in this d-dimension… I'm really sorry.]

For some reason, she sounded as if she pitied me a lot.

CHAPTER 423
PROBLEMS FROM ABOVE (6)

"What's wrong with that?" I asked.

[No matter how scummy—I mean, no matter who you are, I don't think you should hear it.]

'What is she talking about? I'm not really affected.'

Something had to have happened on Earth. It was the only explanation I could think of as to why those managing Earth handed us over. Honestly, I couldn't understand why Benigoa was pitying me because I was here. It would be sad if we got abandoned by our parents, but we got abandoned by Earth itself, which was a bigger deal than getting abandoned by our parents. Therefore, I could say that the latter was sadder.

'They really are gods… '

The way they thought was completely different from humans.

Compared to the first time when she went on a rampage, she became really quiet and seeing that she was answering my questions seriously, the goddess statue before started looking kind of different. While I was deep in my thoughts, I heard Benigoa's voice again.

[It's a relief that you're not affected by it, but… anyway, that's what happened. I-It's kind of sad from our point of view.]

"I can think of it as you guys taking in refugees, right? I should be thanking you, right?" I asked.

[There's no need since we didn't have a choice.]

"*Hm*, then does that mean something happened on Earth?" I asked.

[That place always has problems, and so does this place… If you're asking if a unique problem occurred, then you're right. However, I can't tell you the details because that's not part of my jurisdiction, to begin with. Not only that, they want to hide it as well…]

"*Hm…*"

[Wait. If you're worried about your sister, you don't have to worry. She's…]

Yul-Ha was the type of person who would survive even if she was dropped at the North Pole by herself, so I wasn't really worried about her.

"No, I'm not worried about Yul-Ha," I told her.

[Is that all of your questions?]

"I have one more," I answered.

[What is it?]

"Kim Hyun-Sung. Is that top secret, too?" I asked.

[Part of it is top secret, and there are some things that I don't know, but there are parts I can tell you. What are you curious about exactly? His past life?]

"The reason behind his regression and this Altanus who made Kim Hyun-Sung regress. Can you tell me about it?" I asked.

This was actually my main question because I was extremely curious about it. Benigoa went silent for a while, so I was sure that she was sorting out the parts that she could tell me and the parts that she couldn't tell me. I patted the goddess statue lightly, and I heard her voice a few moments later.

[He regressed because Altanus wanted him to regress.]

"…"

[Altanus is a god and a manager, just like us. She's[1] in charge of Kim Hyun-Sung.]

"As expected. Where's Altanus? Can I meet her?" I asked.

[No, that's impossible.]

"How come?"

[Altanus doesn't exist anymore.]

"*Ah*…"

[She died. Actually, saying that she disappeared is a better description. It was the price she had to pay for turning back time, and we inherited her will.]

'As expected… '

Giving out Forced Quests and jobs consumed a tremendous amount of holy power, so I was sure that an unimaginable amount of holy power was necessary to perform an overpowered miracle like time regression.

After all, it was literally turning back time. It was highly likely that Altanus was a god who was higher in rank than Benigoa because such a ridiculous miracle like time regression shouldn't have been possible under normal circumstances.

I couldn't even imagine Benigoa turning back time. She had to hide in a goddess statue after going bankrupt, so how could she have enough holy power to perform time regression?

'Tsk.'

[Altanus loved that man. And… she pitied his life. After giving it a lot of thought, she decided to sacrifice herself and turn everything back. Of course, I think I tried to stop her back then, but… I respected her decision. I'm sure there isn't a god who could make a decision like that, and we all feel the same way about her.]

"Could you tell me what his past life was like?" I asked.

[You have a general idea already. You found out through that special human named Kasugano Yuno. Of course, I don't know the details either.]

"You guys don't remember his past life either?" I questioned.

[Yes and no. We can't remember all of it, but we remember Altanus' will.]

“I don’t know anything about Altanus’ will or whatever. It’s not something I can just accept. You’re telling me that you can’t see the Dark World that Kasugano Yuno can see?” I asked.

[Don’t underestimate the potential of humans. She’s special. It’s the same for the humans named Jung Ha-Yan and Cha Hee-Ra. Human potential is endless. Even your Mind’s Eye—no, forget I said anything. Anyway, some of us can see the Dark World you mentioned, but there are limits. Managing a dimension is a lot harder and more complicated than you think. If we can fix everything, then Altanus wouldn’t have turned Kim Hyun-Sung into a regressor.]

“Potential?”

[Yeah, potential. I’m sure Altanus saw that in him.]

“So you guys aren’t perfect either.”

[That’s right, we’re not perfect. Keep that in mind, my proud Father Lee Ki-Young. We’re not perfect either. We’re incomplete. We’re just standing in a different position from those on the continent, but we’re not that different from you. Keep that in mind.]

“There’s no need to emphasize that. I can tell just by looking at you. More than that, I feel like you avoided my question with a vague answer, Goddess Benigoa. What I’m curious about is the reason behind Kim Hyun-Sung’s regression. I didn’t want to hear about Altanus’ will or whatever. I want to know exactly what kind of threat he experienced and for what reason he regressed. To be blunt, I want to know the reason why you guys failed,” I explained.

[That’s not top-secret information, but I can’t tell you about it. It’s probably better if you hear it from Kim Hyun-Sung or Kasugano Yuno. One thing I can tell you is that your assumption is correct.]

“What?”

[There is a threat, and Kim Hyun-Sung is preparing for that threat. And I-I don’t acknowledge this, but y-you… have been doing well… s-so far…]

“*Hm*, I knew it. Thanks for the compliment. But… I feel like I haven’t gotten as much information as I thought…” I pointed out.

[I-I can't help it. I really can't… You think I'm not telling you because I don't want to? I want to relax, too!]

"I have one more question," I continued.

[*Kgh. Ugh.* You sure have a lot of questions. I have one—]

"Of course I do. I suddenly got dragged here for some reason. Wouldn't you feel the same way if you were in my shoes? Anyway, here's my question. Can we… *Hm*… return to Earth?" I asked.

[Do you want to go back?]

"Not really, but I'm curious," I replied.

[That's impossible. You guys are residents of this place now. You can't go to any other place.]

"Honestly, I feel kind of sad to hear that," I commented.

I would be lying if I said I wasn't attached to Earth at all, but there was no use crying over spilled milk. I couldn't just throw a tantrum and ask them to send me back to Earth.

I couldn't believe everything that she said, but Earth definitely abandoned us while Benigoa and the other gods accepted us.

I looked up at the goddess statue and saw that Benigoa was still crying tears of blood.

[T-There's nothing I can do about this. It's like a sign… Okay, I-I'll stop crying.]

"What kind of sign? Is it a sign that the integrity of the continent's foundation is deteriorating?" I questioned.

[Something… like that.]

'Shit.'

"Anyway, everything will return to normal once you recover your holy power, right?"

I asked.

[That's pretty much right. A-Anyway, what I wanted to say was…]

"Go ahead. I don't know what it is about, but is it really serious?" I asked.

[It's kind of serious.]

'I wonder what it is… '

Benigoa sounded worried, but she started talking once more.

[H-Have you seen the message about how Quest Creation has temporarily stopped due to unknown reasons?]

"I think I've seen it before…"

[I-It's about that.]

"Didn't it stop because of your current condition? That's—Wait…! Shit…"

[I-I'm sorry. My…]

"S-Stop it with the bullshit. Damn it," I cursed.

It was so ridiculous I almost laughed. It wouldn't take a genius to deduce what it was about. She couldn't give quests because she didn't have the necessary holy power. I understood that part, and it made sense. However, Benigoa wasn't the only one being plagued by that issue.

The others could be in a better condition compared to her, but they were basically in the same boat. It was more accurate to say that they were one big family on a sinking ship rather than in a boat.

I bit my lips nervously, and I heard Benigoa's voice once more.

[The bare minimum is being maintained, like jobs and tutorial dungeons, but… legendary-ranked dungeons and some epic-ranked dungeons will be blocked. A-And the raid monsters that are asleep will be s-sealed…]

“Why would you block those dungeons? Why?” I asked.

[Some of the dungeons are extremely dangerous. Think about the Rift Museum. S-So when it comes to dungeons similar to the Rift Museum… a god has to monitor it. There are places we turned into dungeons, but there are many places that appeared naturally or through rifts. If humans were to enter those dungeons, they would fall into extreme danger. If they fail to conquer the dungeon or if a problem occurs, it’ll be impossible to fix. We don’t want to block those dungeons either, but it’s necessary.]

‘Shit… ’

It seemed that the problem was more serious than I previously thought. I had achieved something noteworthy by uniting the human race, but if we lost our way to becoming even stronger, then it basically meant that we were in the worst-case scenario.

It was undeniable that players would become stronger through battles. The reason why the humans in Kim Hyun-Sung’s past life were extremely strong was that they spent most of their time fighting those stronger than them.

I wasn’t praising them for how they spent a long time killing each other like idiots. I was talking about how they were able to eventually move forward through conflict.

The threat Kim Hyun-Sung was expecting and was preparing for truly existed, and even though I knew that it had to be real, I didn’t expect to hear from Benigoa that they would block the dungeons.

‘They’re going to block the dungeons?’

Blocking the dungeons meant blocking our path to growth, especially if they blocked the epic and legendary-ranked dungeons that were often visited by special players.

I couldn’t even begin to describe the chaos that would occur the moment those dungeons couldn’t be accessed anymore. If they sealed the raid monsters as well, then the situation would become worse.

The processing factories that produced items using monster by-products would close down, and the overflowing workers would end up on the streets with no work. It was safe to assume that the economy and the firepower of each country would

suffer a lot of damage.

People could sell supplies because of the dungeons' existence and because there were people constantly entering those dungeons. In other words, people were making money because there were people who spent money.

It was a system that had long become an integral part of society. It was kind of exaggerated, but it was no different from the complete disappearance of oil in modern society.

'We're going to go completely broke… '

Obviously, Lee Ki-Young would have to stop selling potions as well.

'Ki-Young Coin's price will plummet.'

"Shit…"

'Ki-Young Coin's price will plummet…!'

"Shit!"

'Let's go to Mirror Lake!'

I knew I was exaggerating right now, but I couldn't help but keep on imagining scenes that I didn't want to see at all. I couldn't help but start yelling amidst the confusion in my heart, and it was all because Benigoa was making me angry.

[Q-Quest Creation will also be suspended all over the continent for the time being. I-I don't know when we can resume…]

"…"

[…]

"You crazy troll…!"

I genuinely think that she was trolling.

1. Finally, we got confirmation that Altanus is a she ☜

CHAPTER 424
PROBLEMS FROM ABOVE (7)

Silence immediately descended, and I heard Benigoa's voice a beat later. I thought she would respond with a high-pitched voice, but her voice sounded so low that it sounded more like a mosquito's droning.

Honestly, it was strange to hear her speak like that. She seemed childish because of it.

[…]

"…"

[It's all someone's fault…]

"What?" I asked.

[Do you really think I'm doing this because I…]

"What did you say?" I asked again.

[I-It's nothing.]

"…"

I was sure the reason the incompetent Benigoa went bankrupt was because of the amount of holy power she had to use on me.

However, if I were to judge the situation carefully, I would say that the amount of influence I had was as small as fine dust.

'Actually, that's not true. I received a reasonable reward based on my actions, so this is completely different from that.'

Even if I contributed a lot to her bankruptcy…

'This is still a bit too much.'

I couldn't help but think that the problem was too big because the order of the continent was on the brink of falling apart. I was sure the things Benigoa informed me just now were only one part of the problem. If something really did happen, I was sure that there would be a lot of side effects in addition to the issue of the quests and dungeons not functioning properly.

It was no different from the managers of the continent letting go of our hands.

Actually, it was more like they were abandoning us. We were basically travelers without a compass or a boat without a captain.

I was gradually getting angry, and whether Benigoa knew how I felt or not, she kept mumbling excuses. Eventually, she released a deep sigh because even she couldn't give a clear answer about what was going on.

"*Whoo*…"

[…]

"…"

[I-I'm sorry…]

"…"

[I-I'm sorry… my proud honorary cardinal. You know how much I care about you, right? I-It's not your fault, so don't worry too much about it. Forget what I said just now. You can do that, right?]

"*Geez,* I know that much. It's not like I did anything wrong. You caused all of this. You're hilarious. I gave you so much holy power from down here, and yet that's all you can do? There's a limit to how incompetent you can be…"

"I can't say much since I'm not your manager, but I think you should do some self-reflection. I'm sure it doesn't feel good getting criticized by a human, but this is advice from a follower who really believes in you," I explained.

[*Ughhhhhh.*]

“Did you secretly stash it away somewhere?” I asked.

[*Hiccup.]*

I wanted to continue criticizing her, but I knew that it was more important for us to deal with the current situation rather than the reason why the situation even happened in the first place. If everything I heard today after coming to this place was true…

‘It can be considered another threat.’

We wouldn’t be able to quickly wrap this up. If a raid boss simply appeared and the issue was killing it, then I could approach the issue without much issue, but this was more complicated than that. It was a social issue, and many people were involved in it.

“Have you thought of a solution?” I asked.

[No. It just… happened so suddenly that we didn’t have the chance to deal with it. It happened so fast, like a bubble getting popped…]

‘Shit… ’

[A-Anyway, that’s what happened. The system will still function at the bare minimum, but it may be kind of unstable…]

“Unstable? What part of the system is unstable?” I questioned.

[I-I don’t know the details just yet…]

‘Is she being serious right now?’

“So… why did you tell me this all of a sudden? Are you asking me to take care of this for you?” I asked.

[Half… of it is right. I-I know this isn’t your area of expertise, but I’d like you to take care of the chaos that’s going to happen on the continent as long as it’s not beyond your capabilities…]

“Are you telling me to try controlling the continent?”

[No, that's impossible. I'm not telling you to do the impossible. It's exactly what I said. I-I'm afraid that the children on the continent will get really confused if many changes happened at once. If you can… deal with that a bit… You're so good at handling things like that, Father Lee Ki-Young.]

"So you want me to clean up your mess? Even if I managed to keep things stable, I still don't think that the situation will end right there and then…"

"I'm sure you know how massive the consequences are if the system stopped working, right? Society will fall into chaos, and a few nations will go bankrupt right away, like how you guys went bankrupt. The people will end up on the street…"

"Moreover, yes, it's just temporary, but we will still get worried if we lost the only method we have to level up. Timing is important when it comes to a situation like this. Yes, we can employ a band-aid solution, but it really won't be a solution…"

"It would be more like we would have to tough it out until everything is fixed," I explained.

[…]

"When is it going to come back exactly?" I asked.

[Earliest will be in three years… I honestly don't know the details. If we can keep paying my debt at this rate, then things might go back to normal sooner than that. Of course, we can open epic and legendary-ranked dungeons a lot faster than that.]

'This is a big problem… '

I couldn't help but gulp at the way she casually explained. The earliest was three years… I thought the scenario of Benigoa backstabbing me was the worst-case scenario, but this was just as bad as that.

Honestly, I found it difficult to decide which scenario was the worst.

I got so frustrated that I started pulling my head.

I eventually asked, "Is there anything else you need to tell me, or is there anything else I need to know?"

[No… that's all.]

"…"

[I'm ashamed…]

"You shouldn't be ashamed in front of me. You should be ashamed of yourself. Anyway, it's fine. I'll think about it on my own," I told her.

[What? What? What? Think on your own?]

"It's just like I said. I'm going to think on my own," I repeated.

[Y-You don't have something else in mind, right?]

"What do you mean?" I asked.

[Y-You know… the plan to backstab the fallen god, Benigoa…]

"It's nothing like that. I'm not doing that. I'll be thinking about how to handle this issue. I'll take care of it, so don't worry about it. However, I'm going to be using your name often, so keep that in mind…" I told her.

[Really? Of course. I-I'll do what you say, Father Lee Ki-Young! But… you really don't have other plans, right? Father Lee Ki-Young? Y-You know how much I care about you, right? D-Don't do anything strange… We're a team, right?]

"I'm not, so stop worrying about it. I'm not the type of person to casually backstab people. I don't plan on making you guys my enemies. I just need time to think for myself. If you were in my shoes, wouldn't you need time to think as well?" I asked.

[I-I'm relieved to hear that, but…]

"Anyway, I'm leaving. The people outside have been waiting a long time, and I'll give some random excuse about why you're crying," I continued.

[Okay…]

"And I want you to prepare a hefty reward for me. I'm going to come and claim it as soon as I'm done taking care of all this," I added.

[…]

I removed my hand from the statue before I could hear her answer. When I looked up at the goddess statue again, it was still crying tears of blood. I touched the statue just in case, but I couldn't hear anything anymore.

I looked at the statue from afar, and the reality was finally starting to sink in for me. It was interesting how I had a conversation with the literal Goddess of Benigoa, and it was unexpected how I had to face a huge problem now.

'It's really unexpected… '

I knew there was a problem, but I never thought that it would be this big of a problem. It was so ridiculous that I couldn't help but chuckle. I didn't know where to start, but that didn't mean I didn't have any idea. If I were to keep this issue simple, then there was a simple solution to it as well. One of them was…

'Increasing the people's fate on the gods and goddesses.'

Helping Benigoa and the other gods get back to their position was the right thing to do, and thanks to my image and reputation, faith in the gods was already firmly established on this continent.

Once I was done gathering enough power for Benigoa, then the most important thing to do afterward was to return the unstable continent to its original state. I had to revitalize all the gods on the continent within two—no, a year.

I was basically a life rehabilitation—no, a new life rehabilitation consultant who could help the gods return to their social life a bit faster. While all of that was ongoing, the next thing I had to do in the interim was…

'I have to arrange alternative resources for people to level up and earn… '

I could forcefully reduce the time it would take to implement the first solution, but this was the hardest part of the first solution. After all, it would be irrational to think that there were alternatives for quests and dungeons.

To create an alternative for those two was basically creating a new workplace. The players had to grow, earn rewards, and money in the form of gold. It had to be a qualified and sufficient alternative for the players.

I had to take care of the players, or the situation would become worse. The high-level foreigners would be out of jobs, and they would have to enter rare or even average-ranked dungeons to earn money.

If that were to happen, then the novices who should be growing wouldn't be able to grow as fast as they normally would. In addition, there could even be frequent conflicts between the high-level players and the novices due to the skill gap.

I couldn't help but think of the worst that could happen during the three years Benigoa would need to return everything to normal, and that worst-case scenario was…

'The complete interruption of mankind's growth.'

In addition to being unable to grow, they might even retire from the scene. Of course, it wasn't really my business if those high-level players retired. Honestly, I would be happy to see them retire, but…

'I can't let them do that… '

Anyway, I was in a dilemma for many reasons, and no matter how hard I thought about it, I couldn't think of a solution. However, the remark I made earlier started pricking my conscience.

"It's not like I can make a dungeon. Shit…" I mumbled.

'…'

"Wait, I already have one…"

I got so busy that I had basically forgotten about it. But right now, it popped up in my mind. I activated Mind's Eye and saw a title I had been ignoring until now.

[Rift Museum Rank 4 Manager]

I thought it was worth thinking about…

'Did they not block the Rift Museum?'

I had to check to make sure. However, there was a high chance that the Rift Museum was still operating. After all, it was a part of my jurisdiction rather than the gods. The Rift Museum was an Unranked Dungeon as well, and it was actually about to open.

We held a few closed betas, but we had no time to hold an open beta. In addition, we still hadn't made a concrete business plan for the Rift Museum.

If I were asked whether I would accept legendary and epic-ranked foreigners, I would definitely nod because there were still a lot of monsters remaining in the Rift Museum.

Max had also created a bunch of chimeras that had to be handled. It was completely impossible to enter dungeons right now, so the Rift Museum was basically priceless right now.

'I can also sell potions there. Actually, I can sell more than that.'

I can sell potions, food, and lodging… and if I were to go further, I could also open a gift shop and even a casino because they were necessary for a working and developing economy.

"Rift Land…"

It would be a magical place that would revitalize the economy in the upcoming recession of the continent, and I couldn't help but smile at the reasonable solution I just found.

CHAPTER 425
WINNERS AND LOSERS (1)

I would probably have to make sure that the details were right, and there were also some parts that I had to think deeply about. However, I already had a gist of what I was about to do.

Lee Ji-Hye and my lovely son, as well as a manager of the museum, Max, did some maintenance on the Rift Museum a few months ago, so I was sure that we would be able to open the Rift Museum before Benigoa's dumb actions influenced the continent.

My footsteps became light and springy, and when I opened the door, I saw the people waiting anxiously for me. The first person I noticed was naturally Father Basel. He was with Sister Jayna and Sister Helena.

I unknowingly stepped back when I saw Father Basel pushing Sister Jayna and Sister Helena away. However, I was currently in a good mood, so I was willing to accept his behavior.

"Father Lee Ki-Young! Did you… hear the goddess' voice?" he asked.

'I did. That dumb bitch was planning on ruining us all. Don't trust Benigoa, Father Basel.'

I wanted to say that, but there was no way I could say something like that, so I just gave him a vague answer.

"Yes, I did. I honestly don't remember much, but… I vaguely remember having a connection with her," I answered.

"Really?" he asked.

"Yes. This is… actually my first time receiving a message from her this way, so I'm sorry for making you wait, Father Basel," I replied.

“No, it’s fine. You spent time with the goddess. By the way… what did she say? Is she well?” he asked.

“Well…” I paused.

“That doesn’t sound like good news,” he commented.

“Yes, it’s not,” I said.

“*Huh… huh…* Are you saying something happened to the goddess?” he questioned.

“But… it’s nothing for you to worry about. The goddess is safe for now, but she warned that strange phenomena will start happening all over the continent, and this was just the beginning,” I told him.

“What… do you mean?” he asked.

“I heard that Benigoa and the other gods of the continent are really weak right now. I’m sure you already know, but it’s because of the demonic forces taking root all over the continent. They are siphoning the continent’s energy for their own. The servants of the demons who are still all over the continent are threatening our holy land,” I clarified.

“T-T-Those… bastards…” he cursed.

Father Basel started trembling. At the sight, I couldn’t help but think that he would dispatch the holy knights without hesitation as long as I convinced him of my story.

‘Not bad.’

I knew Father Basel trusted me, but I didn’t think he trusted me *this* much. I was sure the advent of the goddess incident influenced it.

‘It’s not strange.’

I proved that the Goddess of Benigoa went inside and communicated through me, so it would be strange if he didn’t believe me when I told him that I had spoken a word or two to her.

‘This can be useful.’

Now that I thought about it, I didn't need to be in a hurry about opening the museum. The majority of the dungeons would be closed, along with some epic and legendary-ranked dungeons.

The people working for the demons were probably located near those dungeons. The system didn't label the places where the demons were living as dungeons, but who cared? Killing humans—no, demons was also another way to level up.

Mediliv, a demon officer, was living in the Demon Spire. And the Demon Spire was a place where one could earn experience points, items, and fame. There was a limit to how many people could enter at once, and only parties were allowed entry.

Of course, aside from the Demon Spire, there were also many demons living in other places similar to the Demon Spire.

The continent was apparently creating dozens—no, hundreds of dungeons a day. The bastards interfering with the union of mankind were those demon bastards.

This would also be considered a holy war because people would be fighting for the gods they were serving. Therefore, we would be able to obtain holy power from the believers in this manner. Benigoa and the other gods should be able to rest without worries.

'Nice… it's perfect. Perfect. This is how you manage things, Benigoa.'

There were definitely some questionable parts, but I could worry about the details later.

I looked at Father Basel and heard his voice again.

"Do you know where they're located, Father Lee Ki-Young?"

"She didn't tell me… the exact location, but I'll do my best to find their trail, Father Basel," I replied.

"You're reliable and worthy of the title of Honorary Cardinal. You really are an envoy sent by the Goddess of Benigoa herself. It's because of you that we're able to go into so many wars and overcome many threats. If it weren't for you, not even the Sacred Democratic Country could have grown this much. I'm genuinely grateful to you, and it's a relief that someone like you is standing next to the goddess. Really…" Father

Basel complimented.

“It’s nothing, Father Basel. The Goddess of Benigoa actually said…” I trailed off.

“…”

“She asked me to tell you that she’s always watching, and she’s thankful to you,” I continued.

“*Huek…!”* It was empty words for the dummy who only cared about the goddess. I wasn’t used to seeing an old grandpa crying. I lied to him, but when I saw him happy, I couldn’t help but think that my lie was worth it.

“Oh, goddess…! thank you. Thank you, Goddess of Benigoa!” he exclaimed.

“…”

“I wasn’t wrong to serve only the goddess…” he continued.

“I’m sure that… I’m sure that she’s been watching all this time since she’s always with us,” I commented.

Of course, I wasn’t sure if she was really watching us all the time, but as long as Father Basel was happy, that was all that mattered.

The people from behind nodded at the heartwarming scene.

I was sure the high-ranking officials were happier than me because they had to deal with Father Basel’s anger all this while. Honestly, I could even see them throwing looks of gratitude at me because I made Father Basel feel better.

“I-I’ll head in first, Father Lee Ki-Young. I want to spend time with you, but I should pray to the goddess for the rest of the day,” he stuttered.

“That’s a good idea, Father Basel,” I said.

“And if you find the location of the dirty demon servants that are located all over the continent, could you let me know right away? I’ll send the holy knights myself,” he requested.

“Sure.”

“How dare they try to harm the goddess! Sister Helena!” he called out.

“Yes, sir,” Sister Helena answered.

“I want you to start questioning that demon summoner Jin Cheong about the demon servants located all over the continent. We can’t just stand by without doing anything,” he ordered.

“Yes, Your Holiness!” she replied.

‘Ah, that Jin Cheong bastard… today is going to be a long day for him.’

I didn’t expect that Jin Cheong would get hit while he was lying down. I thought he would be able to rest in the next few days until his trial, but I couldn’t help but dedicate a moment of silence for him upon realizing that he would get tortured today.

Honestly, things would become easier for me if he confessed, so I naturally thought that it wouldn’t be a bad idea to meet him.

I was sure that it would be a bothersome negotiation, but we had already determined who was strong and who was weak, so it didn’t really matter that much anymore.

If I made him an offer, he would definitely accept it.

‘Strike the iron while it’s hot, I guess… ’

It wouldn’t be a bad idea to visit him right now.

“I’ll visit him myself, Father Basel,” I volunteered.

“You don’t mind doing that?” he asked.

“I don’t. I’m worried about the goddess as well, so I can’t just sit by and watch. I’m not sure if I’ll be helpful, but I’ll try convincing him,” I answered.

“I’ll feel relieved if you could do that for us, Father Lee Ki-Young,” he said.

“I’m just doing my best for the goddess,” I told him.

“I’ll leave it to you.”

‘Yeah, I trust you as well.’

We briefly hugged, and he started walking away. I couldn’t help but smile as I watched Father Basel walking away. Jung Ha-Yan quickly seized the opportunity, and she ran toward me as soon as she realized that it was finally over.

Jo Hye-Jin and Kasugano Yuno were walking slowly while talking, while Elene still looked like she was walking on thin ice.

The members of the task force I brought with me in case of an emergency started playing mind games among themselves.

It would have been a lot better if they were here to have fun among themselves, but the issue was that they waged a war of nerves against each other.

I thought Hee-Ra noona was going to approach me immediately as well, but she seemed like she was curious about something else.

“Darling,” Hee-Ra noona called out.

“Yeah?”

“Benigoa’s voice… Did you really hear her?” she asked.

“You don’t believe me?” I questioned.

“I mean, you do lie a lot… Well, that’s karma,” she commented.

“…”

“…”

“I’m telling the truth, noona. I honestly didn’t think that I’d hear her, but it worked out somehow. I’m sure I asked all the questions you were curious about, but I’ll tell you about them later. More than that, there’s a serious issue. You’ll be surprised once you hear it,” I told her.

“What is it?” she asked.

“Quest Creation all over the continent will be paused for the time being. Of course, it’ll be different depending on the situation, but aside from job-related quests and the quests in tutorial dungeons, we won’t be receiving any quests soon,” I answered.

“You’re joking, right?” she asked, astonished.

“A few legendary-ranked dungeons can still be accessed, but entry is limited. Apparently, something happened up there,” I added.

“That sounds… bad. However, it’s really interesting to hear that… So you can really communicate with the gods,” she muttered.

“I just got lucky,” I said.

“Anyway, it looks like things are going to get chaotic. Can this be resolved? Before that, how long would it take for things to go back to normal?” she asked.

“Three years at the earliest, but of course, we can do something to shorten that. I have a plan in my head on what we should do, and that’s the reason why I’m going to visit Jin Cheong. I don’t really want to see him, but it looks like I have no choice,” I explained.

“*Hm*.”

“I-I don’t really like him,” Jung Ha-Yan chimed in.

“I feel the same way, Ha-Yan. But I have no choice. I need to do this. *Ah*, you don’t need to keep following me. I want all of you to rest for now, and we can go out to eat later tonight once I’m done,” I told them.

“That sounds good. I have plans of my own here anyway,” Cha Hee-Ra said.

“Okay…” Jung Ha-Yan answered.

“Will you be fine?” Jo Hye-Jin asked.

“I’ll be fine. I’m just going to talk to him,” I replied.

Jung Ha-Yan looked at me as if she was begging me to take her with me, but if I took one of them, then I would have to take all of them with me. It wouldn't take long anyway, so it wouldn't be a bad idea to go by myself.

'I wonder how he's doing… '

This visit was actually kind of overdue. After all, I had never visited him again since he landed in prison.

'That bastard doesn't die easily as well… '

I walked into the underground interrogation room located within the Sacred Democratic Country, and I was greeted by the dark and moist interior of the interrogation room.

It was obvious, but the colors and the atmosphere of the place made Light Ki-Young stick out like a sore thumb.

CHAPTER 426
WINNERS AND LOSERS (2)

'I think this is my first time here.'

As far as I could remember, this was definitely my first time here. It wasn't really appropriate for me to be in places the heretic inquisitors were managing because they were wet and dark, making them look like dungeons.

Nothing would happen, of course, but I couldn't help but get nervous at the moans and screams I could hear coming from everywhere. There were even people begging to be killed, so I started to cower just a bit.

I had no idea what they went through that they were begging to be killed, but I could easily guess it without even looking at them.

'How are they managing this place anyway?'

The Order of Benigoa was the one managing the heretic inquisitors from the start, but I guarantee this wasn't what they had in mind.

Thanks to Father Basel, the heretic inquisitors started to have a bigger role, and they were revitalized because of the recent events. All religions had heretic inquisitors or demon hunters, but the Order of Benigoa had grown bigger than I thought.

I couldn't help but get curious if this place, which was basically a factory of negative emotions, had contributed to Benigoa's bankruptcy.

'It's possible… '

I was kind of embarrassed to say this because I was a devout follower of Benigoa and a genuine ally of Father Basel, but this place kind of seemed like a hideout of demons. Darkness exists wherever there was light, but I couldn't say that this place was being managed in the name of light.

It would actually be understandable if a huge part of the reason why Benigoa went

bankrupt were because of places like this. She gained a lot of holy power—yes, but her expenditure was huge as well.

“I’m sure it’s difficult up there as well,” I mumbled.

“Did you say something, Father Lee Ki-Young?” Helena asked.

“No, it’s nothing, Sister Helena,” I replied.

“…”

“…”

“If the location is uncomfortable for you, I can bring the demon summoner to a different—”

“It’s fine, Sister Helena. This isn’t exactly a great place, but places like this need to exist. It’s more like I admire the place rather than I’m feeling uncomfortable in it. I’m sure it’s difficult for people to work here, so you should be proud that you can. This isn’t dirty work, and it’s holier than anything else,” I explained.

“…”

“I’m sure the Goddess of Benigoa will be happy when she sees this place. *Haha*,” I laughed.

I was sure that Benigoa would frown and cry while telling us to stop doing this, but of course, I couldn’t tell Helene that. It was bad news for Benigoa, but this kind of place was necessary. It was a cruel place.

I honestly wanted to reduce the number of places like this so that Benigoa would receive more holy power, but I couldn’t do that. Even if Benigoa got tainted and her body started decaying, places like this had to remain, no matter what

Sister Helena definitely liked my opinion because she was slowly loosening up. I was honestly kind of scared of being alone with her, but she definitely started feeling better when I told her that the goddess was always watching us.

Helene lowered her head and muttered, “Father Lee Ki-Young.”

“Yes, Sister Helena?”

“I was… thinking about holding a prayer meeting with Sister Jayna…” she started.

“If you invite me, I’ll attend. It’ll be a bit difficult to do that right now, but it brings me great joy to attend a prayer meeting with you and Sister Jayna, so, of course, I’ll attend,” I told her.

“…”

“By the way… I think I can enter on my own from here,” I said.

“Will you really be okay?” she asked.

“Of course,” I replied.

“Okay, but if something happens—”

“All right,” I interrupted her.

Sister Helena looked happy as she slowly walked away while bowing. This wasn’t my first time seeing her, but this was my first time talking to her alone like this. Her personality was the total opposite of Sister Jessica, so I couldn’t understand how they got along so well.

Anyway, she was done with her job, so it was about time for me to do my own job.

“Was it here?”

I stood in front of the door while mumbling, but I didn’t need to ask myself that. It seemed like Jin Cheong was receiving special treatment compared to other places because there were several holy barriers around the place. I quietly circulated my holy power, and the barriers disappeared. I did that a few more times, and the large iron door opened, revealing a face I was seeing for the first time in a while.

“It’s… not me…”

“…”

“I’m not a… demon summoner.”

"…"

'I really pity him.'

It was ridiculous how he couldn't even lift his head up. There were wounds all over him, and his limbs were chained with iron. To make things worse, he was hanging on a strange cross, and there were tools I couldn't really describe located on one side of the room.

I didn't know why they were here, but I couldn't look at their grotesque shapes.

In some ways, Jin Cheong was amazing because he still managed to maintain his sanity despite the harsh torture.

If I were him, I would've confessed everything the moment they put those chains on me, but I expected no less from the shitty scum who turned an era into hell. I couldn't help but think that I finally understood how he defeated Kim Hyun-Sung in his past life.

"I'm not a demon summoner. I'm Jin Cheong of the Republic…"

I was sure he felt really aggrieved because he kept mumbling while he was in a state of hypnagogia. He even thought that I was a heretic inquisitor. I honestly had no idea how I should greet him.

First of all, I checked his physical condition with Mind's Eye. I nodded confidently after a while and released him from the strange cross. I thought he would be able to land on his feet, but he weakly crashed to the floor.

'Has he become so weak that he can't even communicate anymore?'

If that were the case, then this was going to be kind of annoying, but when I started talking, Jin Cheong looked at me immediately.

"It's… been a while."

I spoke warmly as if I was meeting a long-lost lover. I tried my best, so I could negotiate with him, but he immediately started seizing as if he couldn't let go of his old personality.

“You…!” Jin Cheong started.

“It’s kind of scary when you look at me like that,” I commented.

“You…! You…! Lee Ki-Youuuuung!” he screamed.

“W-What the?! What’s wrong with you?!” I yelled.

This was probably why there was a saying that one should never bite the hand that was feeding them. I prepared so much food for him, but he immediately threw away the food that I prepared for him and charged at me. The sight reminded me of the monsters I encountered in the tutorial dungeon. He looked like a ruthless criminal right now.

“Bastard! I’ll kill you!!!” he yelled.

I wasn’t sure how he still had so much energy, but it was ridiculous how he stood on his feet and tried to punch me. His stats had regressed to the point that he could only be compared to monsters in the tutorial dungeons. Therefore, I know that he would never be able to hurt me.

I wanted to treat him with respect, but the unexpected attack made me release the untapped violence deep inside of me.

I managed to dodge his right hook because he was moving as slow as a turtle in my eyes, and in retaliation, I sent a left hook toward his left side. As a sign of respect for someone weaker than me, I didn’t use my mana.

However, Jin Cheong still staggered after taking my punch.

“*Cough!*”

I felt like a scumbag, but it had been a while since I felt like I was the stronger individual. I was sure Jin Cheong could feel the difference between us as well, but he still sent another hook using his left hand. I quickly retaliated and sent him flying with a kick. The kick wasn’t that strong, but Jin Cheong slammed into the wall.

‘Perhaps I have potential in hand-to-hand combat… ’

I couldn’t help but tighten my fist. However, when I saw him coughing up blood on

the floor, I realized that it wasn't really that great to defeat the current him.

Despite receiving a punch and a powerful kick, Jin Cheong was still energetic. He kept on hurling abuse at me, but he didn't come at me with his fists blazing anymore.

"I'll kill… I'll kill you! *Cough*," Jin Cheong yelled.

"Why do you keep saying that, Commander Jin Cheong?" I asked.

"Lee Ki-Young, you bastard! Lee Ki-Young, you bastaaaaaard…!"

"I came here to talk to you, Commander. I didn't come here to fight. By the way, the fight just now wasn't my fault. Even I don't like hitting people who can't walk properly, so I hope that you'll understand…"

"And it looks like your organs got injured just now, so I'll use my holy power to ensure that you will be able to talk properly…"

"However, I will only heal you to the point that you won't feel pain. If I heal you too much, you'll just charge at me, right? I don't like violence, so let's talk it over," I suggested.

"You… You…!" he screamed.

"I don't feel too good to see you being so worked up like this, Commander Jin Cheong. I understand that you feel like it's unfair, but there wasn't really anything we could have done about it…"

"You and the Republic were the ones who started the war, and we just responded and won the war. We inflicted pain on each other, but the winners and losers have already been decided, so the losers should just applaud the winners," I continued.

"Bastard… How could you say something like that? I'll kill you no matter what! If not this time, then next time! I'll curse you even in death…!"

"What's the point of cursing me once you're dead? Please have a seat first. As I said, I came here to talk. I didn't come here to waste my time, and it could also be a good thing for you as well," I told him.

"Talk…" he repeated.

“I just came to talk. If you want to talk about the past, that sounds like fun, too. Rivals usually become friends after talking about their past battles. To be honest, I really had a hard time fighting you, and I even thought about running away a few times during the war. I don’t know about you, but I’d say that it was a pretty good fight,” I continued.

“Shut up!”

“It’s… difficult to say that it was a perfect victory. I hope you don’t make weird remarks like you don’t talk to frauds. I turned you into a demon summoner—yes, but you tried to turn me into the scumbag who started the war…”

”If I lost the war, then I would have been in your shoes right now. Anyway, let’s just be understanding of each other,” I suggested.

“…”

“…”

“Don’t you think it’s funny how you’re acting like it’s unfair at this point? Please calm down a bit so that we can talk,” I said.

I was right. If I had lost to Jin Cheong, then I would have been in his shoes right now. I would have been labeled as the war criminal Lee Ki-Young, who brought chaos to the continent. I would have lost my head as well. I wasn’t sure if Jin Cheong agreed to my comment, but the demon summoner and masked scum looked at me quietly. He had to have somewhat organized his thoughts because he drank the water he threw aside.

“…”

“…”

“What do you want?” he asked.

The pathetic side of him disappeared. He looked confident, and he finally had the same mindset as the villain he had been in his past life.

“There’s something I want you to testify about,” I replied.

CHAPTER 427
WINNERS AND LOSERS (3)

"There's something I want you to testify about," I said.

"What?" Jin Cheong asked.

"It's like I said. I want you to testify about something. I like that you're blunt and that you aren't trying to test me. When it comes to negotiations, people usually do that, you know?"

It was pretty annoying, but the man in front of me looked at me quietly without saying anything useless. He had definitely decided to hear me out, and he was definitely worried about getting backstabbed once again. It proved that he was a pretty patient person, and I had an idea of how he developed that kind of mindset.

'He has nothing to lose.'

I couldn't help but nod after seeing him give up, and since he realized that he was on the losing side right now, I could finally have a proper conversation with him. Everything seemed fine, but I still kept my guard up, just in case.

While I was preparing for a situation that shouldn't happen, Jin Cheong started talking.

"Wait, let me ask first. I'm sure you can at least do this much since you said you wanted to talk."

"Of course," I said.

"What's the current situation… outside?" Jin Cheong asked.

He was curious, which was expected. After all, his access to information was severely limited since he was currently in prison. It wasn't really that difficult to give him information that would be useless to him. I wanted to show off the results of my victory, but I also found it fun talking to a vanquished foe.

“Well, everything is fine. As you might expect, the war is over. Mankind has become one, and we’re in the middle of creating a new system so that we would be prepared for the upcoming threat…”

”The entire human race has become one thanks to you, so I should be grateful to you for that. The same goes for the Republic. It was pretty amazing how they kept their mouths shut as if they didn’t know when they started the war,” I replied.

“…”

“I have trash to take care of as well, but the Republic has a lot more trash that they need to handle. Quite a few people of the Republic announced to everyone that you’re the one who started the war. They said they were not at fault, and the war happened because of the demon summoner Jin Cheong’s evil plot…”

”Of course, the Democratic Country and the kingdoms of the continent agree with their statement. There are some questionable parts, but basically, the Sacred Democratic Country has forgiven the Republic…”

”There were some secret negotiations, but the outcome was basically a win-win for us both,” I continued.

“Those bastards…” Jin Cheong cursed.

“They basically used you. In addition, your name has become tantamount to a monster that parents often use to scare their children, and the people despise you a lot. The Republic is actually using you for its propaganda…”

”I knew I’m scum, but it turned out that there had always been a bunch of scum out there as well,” I added.

“Do you really think that you’ll gain anything by coming between the Republic and me?” he asked.

“I’m not trying to come between you two. I’m simply telling the truth. You have been completely abandoned by the higher-ups of the Republic and your followers,” I answered.

“…”

"…"

"However, there are still those who are struggling in their faith in you. They are your underlings awaiting trial, just like you. I was kind of surprised by their loyalty, and they're still alive…"

"You don't have to worry about them dying anytime soon because the Sacred Democratic Country is torturing them for information," I added.

"Are they safe?" he asked.

"Yes, they're safe. I don't know what's going to happen after their trial, but everyone is willing to die for you… We also can't seem to talk to them properly. You trained your subordinates well. They have been refusing to betray you even as we speak," I replied.

"…"

It was amusing to see how Jin Cheong got uncomfortable at the mention of his loyal subordinates. I also couldn't tell whether my answer made him happy or not.

'It makes sense.'

My emotions would have been complicated as well if I were in his position. I wouldn't be happy to hear that my subordinates were being tortured.

"Do you have any other questions? Actually, have you calmed down a bit? Your reaction is a bit different from earlier…" I pointed out.

"Bullshit. I want to kill you right now, but—" he paused.

"I understand, Mr. Jin Cheong," I said.

"It means I somewhat agree with your comment, you fraud…" he continued.

"…"

"What will happen to them?" Jin Cheong asked.

"The bad side or the good side?" I asked.

“I’m asking about my followers,” he replied.

“They’ll die with you after the trial is over. We’ll execute you in the most humane way possible. Even though you’re a demon summoner, and your followers caused harm to the continent as well, there’s no need for us to use cruel and unusual punishment in this new era…”

”It’ll be fast, and you won’t feel any pain. We’re also considering using the potion I made for it. It’ll be less painful for you. You’ll simply fall asleep, and that’s it—you’ll forever part ways with your pain. Who knows? You might even return to Earth after you die. I can guarantee that a clean death is a lot better than staying here,” I answered.

“Is that your offer? If that’s all you have to offer, just leave now. I have already tasted enough of the pain you’re talking about. If you think I’m going to be tempted by an offer like that—”

“No, of course, that’s not all. This isn’t the end. *Ah*, I’ll tell you my offer first. Please take a look at this,” I interrupted him.

I retrieved a document from my pocket and gave it to him, and I saw him reading it. I thought I needed to explain, but from his expression, it seemed that he didn’t need any explanation. It seemed that the masked scum already knew what I wanted.

“Enemies?” Jin Cheong asked.

“Something like that. The figures of the Republic who abandoned you without hesitation are included in that list. Everyone on that list…”

“You’re thinking about getting rid of them. It’s really like you to think that way. It’s a scummy plan,” he commented.

“Yes, they’re all servants of the demon. I can reveal them as well, but won’t it be better if you say it and testify against them? It’s also a way to get back at the people who betrayed you…”

”Some of them don’t need to be mentioned, but I included them just in case. Considering the current situation of the continent, it’s better for one to have more experience—*Ah!* If you accept, I’d be grateful if you put more emphasis on the people who are at the Demon Spire or that so-called Magic Tower,” I requested.

“Didn’t you say you wanted to unite the continent?” he asked.

“They won’t be any use at all, even if they’re alive. They’ll only get in the way,” I answered.

“…”

“They also have different values. I’d like to take everyone with me if possible, but… there’s nothing I can do because all of this is the will of the goddess,” I added.

“Are you…” he started.

“What?” I asked.

“Are you really an envoy chosen by the goddess?” he asked.

“It’s the truth. I really am communicating with the goddess. I’m sure you’re aware, but the goddess of this world isn’t fair. At least, that had always been the case in the things I was involved with. It’s true. The gods really chose me,” I replied.

“How absurd. Those crazy bastards. Crazy… bastards… how… why…” he muttered.

“I have no idea why, but it would be blasphemous of me to say that. How could a mere human begin to even comprehend the will of the gods? Anyway, I’m sure you’re a bit relieved to hear that you lost because I was chosen by the gods. You’re superior and smarter than me. I can actually feel the energy of the people from you,” I continued.

“Stop provoking me, you scum!” he cursed.

He got really dejected when he heard what I said. He looked as if everything in the world had abandoned him. Honestly, a third party would be able to deduce that much judging from his expression.

Jin Cheong seemed like he wasn’t interested in knowing how I managed to corner him, and I couldn’t help but nod in approval at his patience. Of course, the information I told him just now was also effective.

“Now, it’s time for you to choose. This is my offer, and I’ll end the conversation by telling you what benefits you will reap. Whether you’ll accept it or not, it’s entirely

up to you," I said.

"Do I even have a choice? No matter how much I think about it, I can't think of anything that I could offer for you to let me live…" he muttered.

"Surprisingly, I can let you live, but I don't think that you would want to live like that. *Ahem*. Anyway, you'll understand once you hear me out. I'm about to tell you one of the two choices you can make once you accept my offer," I started.

"Go on," he said.

"I'll let you live. You'll live a pitiful life, but you will still be alive. Officially, you'll be executed, and people will think that you're dead. You'll be in a place similar to an underground prison, and you will live your life there. You'll get food and a comfortable place to sleep. You can basically think of it as being marooned," I explained.

"…"

"The second choice is… I'm sure you already have an idea. You'll basically die, but it will be a clean, painless death. The trial will proceed smoothly, and you'll announce the names of the people on this list to the public before parting ways with this continent using a certain method. However…" I paused.

"…"

"However, I'll make sure that you don't die disgraced. Demon Summoner Jin Cheong was actually brainwashed by a mysterious force, and thanks to his sacrifice, the continent was united. I think that's a good plot right there…"

"We can also say that people on this list have been controlling you from behind the scenes, and rather than being executed…" I trailed off. "*Hm*, once you've recovered your senses, you can also take your own life because you couldn't endure the sins you have committed. Of course, you can also let yourself be executed…"

"Anyway, many things are happening at the same time, so I haven't really gotten the opportunity to refine the idea, so I'll have to look more into the details, but that's the big picture…"

"You'll die with honor. *Ah!* Keep in mind that this method will take a bit longer," I

continued.

"*Ha*…"

"You have two choices. Live pitifully until the end, knowing that the people of the continent will always be spitting on your grave, or keep your honor by snitching on the enemies of the Republic. I believe that the two choices I have for you are reasonable choices," I said.

"Can I trust you?" he asked.

"That's up to you. You're no longer in my hands, Mr. Jin Cheong. I did respect you a little bit before, but I no longer have those feelings. Honestly, I'm not really interested in you anymore. There are many issues that I still have to handle, and they are giving me a headache. The reason I'm making this kind of offer is to make the complicated situation *less* complicated."

"Obviously, you can't combine the first and the second choices because I'm worried about my safety as well. If you decline, that'll be the end, and you'll just die as a demon summoner. You won't be able to leave anything behind. You'll just die; that's it. You'll become the worst scum who sold the entire continent out to demons," I answered.

"…"

"What do you think? Are you interested? Will it be your life or honor? I'd choose the former if I were you, but…"

"I want to add one more," he interrupted.

"I'm sorry, but there's no more negotiation," I said.

"I'd like you to be considerate of my followers who are here. They hadn't done anything wrong. Let's end all this between the two of us," he suggested.

"…"

"…"

"Please…" he begged.

“Well, I’ll consider it. It won’t be hard to let them out, anyway. Please give me your answer. I have dinner plans. Will it be your life or honor? Or will you decline the offers altogether?” I asked.

“…”

“…”

Silence enveloped the cell for quite a while. I knew it was a difficult decision to make, but I could already see which decision he would make. The answer was so obvious that it felt like asking him for his answer was a waste of time.

“Honor,” Jin Cheong replied.

He finally made a decision.

‘I can’t understand him.’

It wasn’t just him. I couldn’t understand Charlotte as well. From my point of view, the choices they made throughout their lives were interesting.

Of course, Charlotte didn't die like him, but if she were in Jin Cheong's shoes, then I was sure that she would choose the former.

‘What’s the use of honor when you’re dead?’

Honor in names or personal worth were things I could throw away at any time, and if I were in his shoes, I would get down on my knees and beg to be spared.

However, Jin Cheong seemed like he was more interested in an honorable death rather than being able to continue living.

I stood up and saw Jin Cheong looking at me. He was wearing this expression of resignation that made me feel a bit uncomfortable, especially since he was Jin Cheong.

‘I guess this is the difference between you and me.’

This world was a mess—yes, but I would still choose to stay alive in this world.

“I think we’re done talking… I’ll be on my way,” I told him.

“Keep your promise.” Jin Cheong reminded me.

“I’m not that shitty that I would lie in this situation. It won’t happen right away, but history will forget that you were once a demon summoner. I swear on the name of the Benigoa, so don’t worry about it,” I assured him.

“…”

Of course, swearing on the name of the Benigoa Goddess was just a way to reassure him. However, it had to have been pretty effective because the doubt in his eyes disappeared.

“I trust that you have already memorized the names on the list, so I’ll destroy it. I’m telling you this just in case, but I recommend that you don’t do anything stupid. You won’t be able to do anything anyway, but I’m sure you know better than anyone what will happen if you tell someone else about all this,” I warned him.

“I know,” he said.

“Well then…”

“One day, what you have done will come back and get you,” he remarked.

“That has never happened, and it will never happen. If it had already happened, then why would I be in my current position? In addition, the winners don’t have to take risks, you know,” I replied.

“…”

“Goodbye.”

I would definitely see him on the day of his trial, but I couldn’t help but think that this was our last time meeting privately. I had many things to handle, so I would probably only see him through official news or through the goddess’ mirrors.

I guess this was the end of the commander who was once at the center of the Republic.

After all, he had already given up his life…

When I walked out of the door, I took one final glance at Jin Cheong and saw him sitting there with his eyes shut.

I still couldn't understand his train of thought.

'This asshole… '

And I would probably never be able to understand him for the rest of my life…

CHAPTER 428
SHE'S STILL THE SCARIEST (1)

My offer to Jin Cheong was basically insurance.

Even for me, it would be difficult to convince people that he was brainwashed because I had a lot of things to worry about. I had many things to handle other than this insurance, but it was obvious why I wanted to use the keywords 'brainwash' and 'used.'

'It'll help me as well.'

It would be a beautiful story for him, but it could also be a beautiful story for me as well.

Kim Hyun-Sung was the reason why I had a lot on my mind recently.

Personally, I thought he was no longer suspicious of me being the masked scum—no, it was more like he wasn't suspicious of me in the first place, but no one could say for sure about what would happen in the future.

Our lovely regressor could suddenly misunderstand me one day, so I needed as much insurance as possible.

'If… '

If Kim Hyun-Sung mistook me for the villain of his past life, I would have excuses to use against such allegations.

'I think it'll be good if I make him think that the masked scum was brainwashed… '

The masked scum of his past life didn't perform those evil deeds because he wanted to do them. He was more like a tragic character constantly fighting the demon inside him.

He was a lonely man in pain who would harm himself every night because he was

being tormented by the sins he had committed without his consent. I thought about telling him that the mask was used to hide his crying face, but it definitely wasn't a good idea.

'Still, this isn't bad… '

It wasn't perfect, but making my move with this plan in mind could help me avoid the worst-case scenario. Some people would ridicule me by asking about what was the point of thinking about useless situations when it was all over for Jin Cheong.

I knew it was over for Jin Cheong, but I couldn't let my guard down because one wrong move could be the end of me. It was better to have as much insurance as possible, but it was still a surprise how Jin Cheong accepted my offer without much hesitation.

'Maybe it's a given… '

He had no reason to live aside from getting revenge, and since there was no way he could get revenge, he probably thought about making an honorable exit. He looked so pathetic that I was shocked when I saw him. He had always been a prideful person, so I was sure that his defeat and imprisonment tormented him a lot.

'Anyway, I think this worked out well… '

The process was short, but it worked out.

The pause on quests and dungeons could be resolved through Rift Land and the dungeons where the demon servants were living. Max was doing well on the former method, and if I let Lee Ji-Hye take care of the latter, it should be resolved sooner rather than later. Of course, I had to lead the Rift Museum by creating a business plan.

The ridiculous situation caused my heart to drop for a moment. The sudden appearance of the perfect solution made me want to dance, and the idea that popped into my head made me feel better amidst this uncomfortable meal.

However, Cha Hee-Ra interrupted my train of thought.

"You seem like you're in a good mood, darling. How's the food?"

“This is delicious. It’s melting in my mouth,” I replied.

“I can’t believe you’re leaving when we have just arrived at the capital. How boring. I thought you were going to stay for a while, so I was looking forward to it. Many things changed after the revolution, so there are a lot of things to visit here, darling,” she said.

“I’d like to take a look around if possible, but… an urgent matter came up. As I said before, Quest Creation will be on pause for a while, so this isn’t the situation to just sit by and wait. I was honestly going to eat dinner at the guild, but… I agreed to eat here since we traveled all this way,” I explained.

“Have you taken care of Jin Cheong?” she asked.

“Yeah, it ended pretty well,” I answered.

All of a sudden, Elf Princess Elena joined the conversation.

“Excuse me… Mr. Lee Ki-Young. I’m sorry for asking again, but is it really true?”

“Yes, Miss Elena. It’s a message I received directly from the Goddess of Benigoa, so I’m sure it’s true. Are you able to communicate with Elune, Miss Elena?” I asked.

“Now that I think about it, It’s been a while since I felt him…” she replied.

‘It’s because you have been abandoned… ’

Of course, I couldn’t tell her that.

“According to the Goddess of Benigoa, something big happened in the heavens. She said that the demons on the continent are starting to affect them,” I told her.

“T-Then what…”

“I’m sure we can take care of it without much issue. After we drive out the demons using the power of light and prove our firm belief in the gods, I’m sure Benigoa, Elune, and the other gods will pour their blessings on us again,” I informed her.

“I should do my best then,” she commented.

“Yes, there’s a lot of work that needs to be done. Most of the dungeons the gods were managing for the foreigners have become inaccessible, so I’m sure that it’ll cause a lot of chaos.”

”We need to do what we can to reduce the inevitable chaos because dealing with monsters or hunting requests has long become deeply ingrained in our society…”

”I think the east side of Castle Rock will be fine since a monster forest is located there, but Celia will be in trouble because there aren’t really any massive forests around Celia. Miss Kasugano Yuno, have you…” I paused.

“I haven’t thought of a solution yet, Father Lee Ki-Young. However, if you provide a guideline, I’ll follow it,” Yuno replied.

“Okay…”

“Of course, it’s only right for you to say that we need to prepare for the confusion the foreigners will inevitably experience. I completely agree. I’m sure it won’t take long for all the foreigners to realize that there’s something wrong with the system that’s maintaining and balancing this continent…”

”However, we must make an official announcement and prepare a harsh punishment for those who dare to threaten the honorary cardinal in these trying times,” Yuno suggested.

“I appreciate that,” I said.

“Please don’t worry…”

Kasugano Yuno smiled faintly, but the problem was that she wasn’t the only one who was smiling…

Cha Hee-Ra and Jung Ha-Yan were sitting beside me. Kasugano Yuno and Elena were beside them, while Jo Hye-Jin was sitting beside Elena.

I didn’t regret bringing them with me because it was for safety reasons, but right now, I couldn’t help but start regretting it.

My regret was even stronger because nothing happened in the end.

'I feel like I'm walking on thin ice rather—sitting on a bed of nails. Shit… '

Sitting here was tantamount to torture, and even though they weren't fighting or screaming at each other, no one was looking at each other. They were looking at me while saying what was on their minds. It was ridiculous how they treated each other as if they weren't there. If there were a guy who wouldn't feel the same way I was feeling right now if they were in my shoes, then I would definitely applaud him.

Our conversations had a set cycle as well. Whenever I was about done speaking with one of them, someone else would pull me into a conversation. Once I was done speaking to that person, then someone else would drag me into another conversation.

I enjoyed talking, but this was a bit difficult for me to endure. This wasn't the ideal description, but I felt like I was a piece of cake and the girls were taking away pieces of me to eat.

I also felt like I was in an extremely technical interview with them, where they were actively pressuring me.

The conversations were about work, so Jung Ha-Yan still hadn't found an opportunity to join the conversation. It obviously made her feel a bit despondent, which worried me.

I knew that she wouldn't explode, but she was still Jung Ha-Yan, so I had no idea when she would cause trouble.

I personally hoped that everything would end this way without any issues, but the person whom I thought would never cause me trouble was the one who threw the curveball at me this time.

It was none other than Jo Hye-Jin, who had been eating quietly.

"By the way…"

"Yes?"

"There's something on Miss Ha-Yan's hand, and I've never seen that before. I thought it was an artifact, but I don't think it's an artifact. Did you give it to her as a gift?" she asked.

'Shit…!'

Her words were more painful than getting routed by Jin Cheong and Charlotte.

'Why did she come here wearing that?'

Everyone immediately looked at Jung Ha-Yan's left hand. I was sure they had an idea what it was, but this was the first time that someone brought it up.

The depressed Jung Ha-Yan, who hadn't been able to join the conversation since we started eating, discreetly covered her precious wedding ring. This wasn't a great analogy, but she looked like Gollum trying to hide the ring.

Unfortunately, even a child would see that she wasn't really trying to hide the ring.

Even though she was covering it, she was trying to show it off. Her prideful and confident look was proof of that. She was trying to tell the women here that she was different from them.

"*Ah*… I-It's nothing…" Jung Ha-Yan stuttered.

'Shit.'

Her acting was so awkward…

The way Jung Ha-Ya ridiculed the other women here made her look sassy, and I could guarantee that it was hard to act spiteful when faced with such a cute face like hers.

She said that it was nothing, but anyone could tell that it was *definitely* something.

The other girls flinched as if they realized that they had been staring at the One Ring all this while.

The issue I buried suddenly rose to the surface. Jung Ha-Yan even took off her precious ring as if she got caught red-handed, and she quietly placed it in her pocket. Kasugano Yuno stared at the ring all the way until it disappeared into Jung Ha-Yan's pocket.

Elena already knew about the ring, so she stared at Jung Ha-Yan bitterly.

“What kind of ring was that?” Cha Hee-Ra asked.

“I-It’s nothing. O-Oppa gave it to me as a gift,” Jung Ha-Yan replied.

“Okay, but what is it supposed to be?” she asked again.

“I-It’s a secret. A-A secret between us. *Hehe*,” she stuttered.

“…”

“I-It’s a secret between us, so I can’t tell anyone,” she added.

The way Jung Ha-Yan answered Cha Hee-Ra with a bright smile was overwhelmingly provocative. Her reply was also more infuriating than the words I had used on my enemies. It was cheap and absurd, but it was an effective provocation.

However, Cha Hee-Ra was surprisingly calm, and it made her look like an adult who wouldn’t play along with Jung Ha-Yan’s provocation.

‘I’d expect nothing less from our Hee-Ra noona!’

Kasugano Yuno and Elena looked a bit envious, but…

‘I did tell them before.’

I couldn’t remember the details, but I could remember telling them that there was someone precious to me or that there was someone I wanted to spend my life with, so I was sure that they were currently thinking about what I said.

They were definitely envious, but I could see that they were trying their best to comfort themselves.

‘I-I think they’re okay…?’

Jo Hye-Jin had just dropped a massive bomb, but things hadn’t gone wrong.

The rest of the dinner was uneventful, and the situation was resolved just like that.

“Shall we get going?” I suggested.

“Okay…”

“Are you heading straight to Lindel?” Elena asked.

“I’ll be heading to Celia, Miss Elena,” I replied.

“It was nice to meet you, Miss Kasugano Yuno. Please be careful on your way back,” she said.

“Darling and second girlfriend. Hurry up. Aren’t you in a hurry?” Cha Hee-Ra asked with a smile.

When I saw her smile, I was convinced that the situation was finally over. However, I was forced to think otherwise when I saw how a part of the table on Cha Hee-Ra’s side, just right behind her plate, had basically been squeezed until it crumpled up.

‘That table is made out of steel. Shit…!’

I immediately realized that Cha Hee-Ra’s smile wasn’t genuine.

CHAPTER 429
SHE'S STILL THE SCARIEST (2)

To be exact, the table was made out of special metal. It wasn't a legendary-ranked metal like orichalcum or mithril, but it was still metal. It was probably an epic rank or higher metal, and it could have become a decent weapon rather than just a mere table.

I was surprised that they used something like that to make a table, but I was stupefied and terrified when I realized that Cha Hee-Ra had basically destroyed a table like that with her bare hands.

'Oh, right. She's that type of girl.'

There were a lot of people who could simply cut through metal or change its form using magic, but I was sure that there weren't even five people in the entire continent who could do the same with their strength alone. Not only that, I couldn't even feel any mana, so it proved that she really did that with her fingers alone.

My train of thought lasted for only a moment because Cha Hee-Ra started talking again.

"What are you doing? Hurry up. It's time to go home, right?" Cha Hee-Ra said.

The way she was talking made me wary of her.

"…"

"What's wrong, darling?" she asked.

"Yeah, I'm coming," I replied.

Her expression didn't change, but the subtle frown told me how angry she was, and the reason she wasn't releasing her anger was that she knew how embarrassing it would be to explode in a public place like this. Basically, the value of Cha Hee-Ra's name and her position was too high for her to act like a child, similar to what Jung

Ha-Yan had done.

Now that I thought about it, I had never seen her angry. I saw her warn Jung Ha-Yan and a few other people who dared to challenge her, but I couldn't really say that she was angry because the situation ended while she was smiling.

In addition, she would never really mention what happened in the past, so she was basically a great and generous person.

'This means that she's going to hold a grudge… '

Everyone thought of Cha Hee-Ra as someone who would express her dissatisfaction and anger right there and then.

Knowing that she was holding all of that in suddenly amplified my anxiety, and I wasn't sure if Jung Ha-Yan knew because she passed by Cha Hee-Ra with a victorious smile.

I got goosebumps on my back at the thought of a raging beast suddenly raising her head and crushing the crazy mage's head. It would be a catastrophe. What was even scarier was that it probably wasn't even the worst that could happen.

'I need to take care of this.'

We were finally done with our dinner, and while I was saying goodbye to Oscar, Marilyn, Senator Caitlyn, and my other connections, I still couldn't stop worrying about Cha Hee-Ra.

When Jo Hye-Jin nodded, signaling me to get on the griffon, I had no choice but to speak.

"I'll ride with Miss Cha Hee-Ra."

"Okay, Sub Guild Master.'

It would have been better if she showed some kind of disappointment, but Jo Hye-Jin nodded with a bright smile. It was actually Jung Ha-Yan who looked sad. She looked at me as if she was asking me to reconsider, but this time, I had no other choice.

One would have to reap what one sowed. The balance of power had to be maintained

because the moment the balance collapsed, I would probably collapse as well.

To be exact, it was a balance between the far left and the far right.

“Master, I’ll visit Lindel for the museum issue,” Yuno said.

“Sounds good,” I said.

“Okay.”

Kasugano Yuno and I talked quietly so no one else could hear us. Once we were done with our conversation, I sent her off to Celia. Afterward, I immediately started walking toward the red-headed woman. She looked at me coldly as if she wanted to punch me.

Obviously, I couldn’t allow that to happen because I was sure that I would explode like a piece of tofu if her fist were to collide with me.

“Why not ride with your second girlfriend, *huh?*” Cha Hee-Ra asked.

“Just because, and I wanted to talk to you…” I replied.

“About what?” she asked.

“Well, I don’t have anything specific to talk about, but it’s more like I can’t remember the last time we spent some time alone, and I think we can talk comfortably while riding the griffon. So…” I paused.

“…”

“…”

“Get on,” she said.

“…”

Naturally, I took note of her expression because the situation was *that* scary. I was worried about what Jung Ha-Yan would do after all this, but the top priority right now was to put out the fire that was threatening to inundate the skies.

The griffon carrying Jung Ha-Yan, the elf princess, and Jo Hye-Jin started flying, and the griffon we were riding on started flying as well. I smiled at the members of my fan club waving at me from below, but it didn't take long for that smile to disappear.

'Yeah, it's about time that I took care of her.'

Honestly, Cha Hee-Ra wasn't that important to someone like me since I was already pretty successful. However, Cha Hee-Ra was still the leader of Lindel's best guild, the Red Mercenary Guild.

In addition, she was also holding an important position in Lindel. In other words, she was powerful. Yes, I had grown quite a bit, but she still wasn't someone I could treat casually.

Moreover, I could still remember how she helped me when I first arrived in Lindel, so I couldn't abandon her just like that. Actually, if I decided to abandon her, my head would probably hit the ground first before I could even act on that thought.

Cha Hee-Ra remained quiet during our ride back to Lindel, and I never imagined that she would show me this side of hers.

'She surprisingly has a cute side.'

When I thought about her usual demeanor and attitude, it was rare for her to pout and sulk. Of course, it didn't take long for me to change my train of thought. I had to think about what I could do—what could I do to make the Mercenary Queen feel better?

'What should I do?'

'Think, Light Ki-Young. Don't worry about your pride right now. Think about how Jung Ha-Yan acted when she acted like the Mercenary Queen!'

The answer was already right there, but I wasn't sure if it would work. No, I wasn't even sure if I could do it, but I had to shamelessly do it.

"You know that I like you a lot, right, noona?" I asked.

"…"

“I’m thankful, and honestly, it’s all thanks to you that I managed to come this far. You also trusted me a lot when we first met,” I continued.

Acting cute. In some ways, I felt like I was the girlfriend who was trying to make my angry boyfriend feel better, but this was effective against Cha Hee-Ra because she didn’t want someone who could dominate her.

Otherwise, she wouldn’t have contacted me back then.

I made cute sounds to try and make her feel better. I tried rubbing my head against her back, and I tried to stimulate her by wrapping my hands around her and placing my palms on her stomach.

It didn’t fit me, but I did my best to flirt with her. If I did this to Jo Hye-Jin, I was sure that she would immediately push me off the griffon, but my unique habit had to have taken effect because Cha Hee-Ra kept flinching in response to my advances.

‘Man, I could work at a host bar with this skill. I’d be the best there!’

I had to be talented with this because I started getting into it. Was this how Diaochan felt when she played with Lu Bu and Dong Zhou? Was this how Yang Guifei and Cleopatra felt while they were playing the world like a fiddle? Cosplaying as a sexy man was nauseating, even for me, but her reactions were great, so I was having fun.

‘The Sex Symbol, Lee Ki-Young…!’

I was disgusted with myself, but the way I acted cute would definitely appeal to anyone, regardless of age and gender.

“Cheer up, noona,” I said.

“…”

“I had no choice. It was simply a gift, and Ha-Yan was in a really bad mood, so I gave it to her to cheer her up. You know how much I like you, noona,” I continued.

“…”

“I like your red lips, red hair, confidence, and everything about you. You’re not really angry, are you? I’m overreacting, right?” I asked.

'Why isn't she saying anything? Is she really angry?'

"You know that I had no choice. I think of you as my first, but…" I paused.

'Is she really furious?'

I couldn't see her expression since I was sitting behind her. She wasn't really moving, so I couldn't say for sure that my killer move wasn't working on her. In the end, I had no choice but to reach into the Chanelia Hermes bag Hyun-Sung bought for me.

'Is there a decent ring I can give her?'

I wasn't ready, but acting like I was ready was important. I bought many items I could use to bribe Jung Ha-Yan in case she went on a rampage, and many of them were rings I was going to give her each time.

Unfortunately, I couldn't find anything I could give Cha Hee-Ra.

I got so anxious that I even stuck my head into the bag, and it was then that I stumbled upon a red ring that suited her red lips and hair.

I retrieved the ring and quietly held her arm. She still wasn't looking at me, but it seemed that she didn't mind physical contact between us because she extended her arm toward me.

This part was the most important part because I was sure that she wasn't expecting me to give her a ring. Cha Hee-Ra had to have felt something cold on her left hand because I saw her flinch slightly. I pushed the ring all the way in.

She pulled her arm back slowly, and she looked at her hand in disbelief.

'This is the final blow…!'

I hugged her like a little girl and confessed, "I love you, Cha Hee-Ra. I really love you."

My confession was a half-truth, and something unexpected happened immediately afterward.

"*Huh?*"

Cha Hee-Ra suddenly made the griffon we were riding change directions. The group that left ahead of us didn't notice the change in our heading, and our griffon was already flying toward the ground.

'What's going on?'

I got nervous that I did something wrong, but I couldn't feel any hostility from her.

"N-Noona?" I called out.

I didn't hear her answer, but I could hear her rough breaths.

'Shit… '

If we were in a griffon race, then she would definitely win the trophy.

Meanwhile, our griffon flew close to the ground and entered a strange cave.

'Where are we… '

We were probably inside an abandoned cave, and I wasn't sure if Cha Hee-Ra knew where we were currently headed. Right now, all I could do was hold onto her tightly and endure the wind brushing against my face.

The griffon finally arrived at our unknown destination.

I opened my eyes and started looking around.

"Where are we?" I asked.

The path ahead was blocked, and it was so dark I couldn't see anything.

"Light…"

I carefully circulated my holy power to illuminate the cave, and I saw that the surroundings really resembled a dungeon. In addition, there was also a beast looking at me with bloodshot eyes.

"I wasn't planning on doing this, but… you seduced me," Cha Hee-Ra said.

“What?”

“You seduced me, darling,” she repeated.

“*Huuh*?”

I immediately felt immense pressure, and it was so intense that it was comparable to the pressure that the Fragment of the Ancient God in the Rift Museum gave off.

Cha Hee-Ra walked over to me slowly.

For some reason, I recalled Jin Cheong’s remark.

“One day, what you have done will come back and get you.”

I hope that asshole wasn’t referring to this…

CHAPTER 430
SHE'S STILL THE SCARIEST (3)

'You're alive. Shit. You're alive, Ki-Young. You did it!'

As I slowly opened my eyes, those were the first thought that came to my mind. This was the first time I was so thankful for being alive.

I wanted to mumble words of victory to myself, but my throat had to be completely dry because no words would come out. I was finding it hard to breathe, so I quickly reached out and tried to open a potion.

Unfortunately, my hands were trembling so much that I couldn't open the potion.

I felt weak all over, and I also felt anxious that if I didn't drink this potion now, I would miss the golden opportunity to do so.

Just as I was about to fall into despair, I miraculously opened the potion and started chugging it down as if it were the Potion of Youth.

Of course, one potion wouldn't be enough for me to completely recover, but it was good enough as a first-aid treatment. I felt refreshed like I had gone to a sauna and had just drank a sports drink.

"I almost died."

I wasn't joking. To be honest, I couldn't remember what happened last night. For the first time, I fainted after a few hours. I did wake up a few times in the middle of it, but all I could recall was red hair dancing around and her red eyes looking at me from above.

Now that I thought about it, it was such a ridiculous incident that I couldn't help but laugh.

Of course, I had a great time, and I even felt kind of excited because it felt like our positions were reversed, but my excitement didn't last long.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that my condition was the worst since I arrived on this continent. I felt like all of my energy had been sucked out of me. I couldn't weigh myself here, but I was sure that I lost at least five kilograms. However, the best part was that—no, this was bad. Anyway, I was in bad condition.

'What should I do?'

Obviously, I was worried about what Jung Ha-Yan would do. I was sure she noticed that Cha Hee-Ra and I had gone over to a strange place. I was worried that she would cry and throw a tantrum, but it was interesting how she still hadn't found us.

Actually, it was more like she couldn't find us. Perhaps she couldn't find the coordinates to this place, or she couldn't enter where we were located.

'Is it a dungeon where only two people can enter?'

Perhaps detection magic wouldn't work here? Regardless of what it was, my head was already starting to hurt when I thought about the storm I would have to face once we get back home.

Naturally, I was scared of the situation brewing in Lindel because I wasn't there.

All of a sudden, I heard a voice next to me.

"Are you awake, darling?"

"*Oh*, yeah," I replied.

"Sorry, I kind of went overboard…" Cha Hee-Ra said.

"No, I enjoyed it, too," I answered.

The only problem was that I felt like I would die.

"I'm glad to hear that," she said.

Cha Hee-Ra looked really happy, and she looked revitalized as well. The dark circles beneath her eyes had disappeared, and I couldn't help but stare agape at her because she looked completely different from before.

Cha Hee-Ra looked like her worries and stress had gone away, and she also looked like she had received a vitamin injection.

In other words, Cha Hee-Ra was in her best condition right now.

It felt like mother nature herself had descended to bless her.

“Hold on. Let’s leave after breakfast,” she suggested.

“You made breakfast?” I asked.

“It’s nothing fancy. I just made something simple. Anyway, what do you think about doing a light exercise with me after eating and before leaving?” she asked.

Cha Hee-Ra’s eyes looked similar to Bear Grylls while staring at prey. I realized that I had to escape from this place as soon as possible because I was basically a valuable source of protein here.

“It’s fine. I’m busy as well. I have a lot to do, so—By the way, you seem like you’re in a good mood, noona.” I pointed out with my trembling voice.

“I told you that I was frustrated, right? Yesterday, I felt like my head was filled with dark clouds, but now, my head feels like it has completely cleared up. Really,” she said.

I had to sacrifice myself and endure pain for her to completely recover. However, I was relieved that I was here with Cha Hee-Ra. If I were here with Jung Ha-Yan, then there was no way I would feel this relaxed because I would have to worry about many things, like her locking me up here.

At least, the Cha Hee-Ra wouldn’t possibly think of such a crazy idea.

‘But what’s wrong with your face? Stop thinking about weird things. Don’t lock me up. Shit. Please don’t… ’

Cha Hee-Ra stood up. She looked around with a disappointed look, and she was already wearing the clothes she wore yesterday.

I was sure that she was disappointed because she had no choice but to start moving after I told her that we had to leave because I was busy.

“I already contacted the Blue Guild,” Cha Hee-Ra said.

“When?” I asked.

“Around five in the morning. I’m sure you won’t worry about useless things when you’re asleep, but some issues could have popped up if I hadn’t contacted them. And darling…” she paused.

“Yeah?”

“This is a proposal ring, right?” she asked.

“…”

“…”

“It’s… something like that,” I replied.

I naturally wanted to say no, but I felt a shiver down my spine and realized that there was no way that things would go back to how they were before. Therefore, I nodded.

I wasn’t sure if she knew what I was thinking, but Cha Hee-Ra proudly looked at the ring on her left hand. What happened yesterday definitely wasn’t the only reason why she had a spring in her steps today.

“Where are we?” I asked.

“I don’t know either. It looks similar to a dungeon. There shouldn’t have been a few monsters here, at the very least, but I guess there aren’t any monsters. And what you said about being busy, is it because of Rift Land?” she asked.

“That’s right. I actually need to go and take a look at it right now. I think we can open the dungeon itself without any issues, but we don’t have enough additional content. I have to create a business plan as well. I already have the basic plan in my head, but executing it is a different story,” I answered.

“What do you have in mind?” she asked.

“There’s a lot we can sell aside from the dungeon. If we sell things in front of it, we’ll make big money, noona. We can sell dishes like Bulgogi or Baeksuk, but if we name

them Museum Bulgogi or Museum Baeksuk, then I'm sure that we'll still earn even if we sold them at three times the market price…"

"Of course, we'll be selling dungeon items like MREs and potions, but we can increase the price by including bullshit descriptions like special dungeon zone, special tourist zone, and special economic zone…"

"It's the typical business method of any country, but what can we do? We don't have any other options, and it'll be a big hit. I'm sure of it," I explained.

"Are you sure you're not overestimating it?" she asked.

"They're just paying a fee to enter the dungeon. It's going to be the only active monster dungeon in a world where most dungeons could no longer be accessed, so what's wrong with making a lot of profit?"

"In addition, I'm the only one who can manage that dungeon. This is definitely a fair and profitable business, no matter how you think about it," I answered.

"You must be thinking of the bigger picture… It looks like it'll require a lot of investment at the start," she commented.

"The Blue Guild's funds aren't enough…" I told her.

"You can use the Red Mercenary Guild's funds as well," Cha Hee-Ra offered.

"What? Really?" I asked.

"Just think of it as an investment. I have never lost anything by listening to you, and your money is my money and vice versa. Don't worry. Use as much as you want. Don't worry about anything else. I'll also look into getting more manpower, so don't worry and let me know if there's anything you need, darling," she added.

'Nice. She knows the idea of give and take! Okay! Let's get married, Hee-Ra! Let's get married!'

Of course, I didn't say that out loud.

However, Cha Hee-Ra's words just now really made me want to marry her.

'As expected, women need to be competent.'

Cha Hee-Ra had always been generous and straightforward, but it felt like she was warmer and kinder now.

In fact, she remained kind to me as we rode on the griffon and headed for Lindel. However, the closer we got to Lindel, the more worried I became. It was all because of the bomb that I had basically abandoned.

Jung Ha-Yan wasn't really acting up nowadays, but she was still Jung Ha-Yan, and I had to see her as soon as possible. I had no idea when that spark would reappear once again, but…

'I'm sure everything is fine.'

I was sure that she wouldn't explode in public, and the constant iterative learning she had been going through had to have already made her realize that I didn't like that side of her.

I felt like we weren't traveling fast enough. Fortunately, we were finally approaching Lindel, and as expected, there was a figure sitting far away. Cha Hee-Ra was talking to me sweetly, but I couldn't even hear her anymore.

The person sitting in one corner of the landing area with her knees pulled up was none other than Jung Ha-Yan. She definitely saw our griffon from afar because she quickly ran toward us.

I pitied her because she had definitely been waiting for a long time for us to arrive.

'Yeah… you didn't do anything wrong. It's all my fault. I'm a scum, and it's my fault, but let's just go about this in peace.'

When the griffon landed, Jung Ha-Yan immediately landed in my arms as well.

"…"

It was cute how she hugged tightly without saying anything, but the way she was looking at Cha Hee-Ra wasn't cute. She looked like she was about to go mad, but she had to have remembered Cha Hee-Ra's warning because she wasn't being hostile.

Of course, she was definitely treating Cha Hee-Ra coldly.

“You heard what happened, right? There was something we needed to take care of that we forgot, so I went to that dungeon with my darling. I’d recommend you visit that dungeon, second girlfriend,” Cha Hee-Ra said.

Jung Ha-Yan and I would never go to that place because I would definitely show up in the news as a missing person if we were to go there.

Anyway, Cha Hee-Ra proceeded to give me a hug, and she even patted Jung Ha-Yan’s shoulder while showing off the ring in her left hand. It wasn’t much, but she had definitely recovered a part of her pride.

“I'll head out first, darling,” she told me.

Of course, Jung Ha-Yan’s pride was hurt. She definitely felt aggrieved and angry because she was trying to stop herself from crying by biting her lips. Unfortunately, she still ended up crying.

‘What should I do?’

I felt even more heartbroken because this war of nerves was a kind of war that didn’t involve any physical fights. I couldn’t even begin to wrap my head around what would happen if the crazy women around me went all out and started fighting each other.

Even if Jung Ha-Yan and Cha Hee-Ra decided not to participate, I still couldn’t imagine seeing Kasugano Yuno and Lee Ji-Hye fight. Kasugano Yuno was following me unconditionally, but Lee Ji-Hye was a monster on a whole new level.

After all, she had already declared herself as the champion.

‘No, Lee Ji-Hye is the best because she’s the most realistic.’

Meanwhile, the quiet Elena still couldn’t get rid of her emotional turmoil.

“Nothing happened. We really had business we had to handle, Ha-yan. I’m sorry for not telling you earlier. How about we go watch a play after work? I’ll come right after my work at Rift Land is done. It’ll only take a few hours,” I suggested.

"…"

"Stop crying. You understand, right?" I asked.

Nod, nod.

"You've been out here since yesterday, right? Go in and get some sleep, Ha-Yan. I'm sure you're tired. I'll take you to your room," I told her.

Nod, nod.

"That's a nice girl," I complimented.

"*Oh…"* Jung Ha-Yan said.

"…"

"O-Oppa…!" she called out.

"Yeah?"

"W-W-When… When are we going to get married? You said… we were going to get married, right?" she asked.

Still, she was the scariest.

"*Ugh.* You said we were going to get married… *Kgggh*," she repeated.

At the sight of that, I realized that the effects of the ring were wearing off.

CHAPTER 431
LIFE THREATENING

In the first place, it didn't make sense that the effect of that medicine would vanish because it was a proposal tantamount to a Mythic elixir for Jung Ha-Yan. If I were to exaggerate a bit, it was a supreme elixir to calm her down at any given time.

'Did I neglect her too much?'

I started regretting what I had been doing all this while. I knew I had gotten a bit busy recently, but it was no excuse to neglect her mental health. However, there wasn't really much I could have done back when I was still inside Salit with Elena.

'No, that situation isn't really relevant. Now that I'm thinking about it, I don't think she's acting like this because I have been neglecting her a lot.'

I recalled what I had been doing and realized that I wasn't really neglecting her that much. I knew just how scary Jung Ha-Yan could be whenever she went crazy, so I made sure to invest time and effort to take care of her mental death.

I was busy, but I made sure to spend time with her on short dates. I also made sure to satisfy her physically and mentally. I had been doing my best, and what I had been doing should have been enough to satisfy her.

I had an idea why her tolerance had become higher. It was probably because of her higher overall expectation. Usually, she would be satisfied with holding hands, kissing, doing leisure activities, and eating out together.

However, it seemed that my proposal to get married increased her expectations. It was similar to receiving tolerance to medications. She needed a higher dose for her to become satisfied.

There was a saying about how people would eventually take things for granted if they were constantly being showered with favors. Jung Ha-Yan was basically taking me for granted right now.

I was sure that she was thinking along the lines of…

'I'm his fiancée, so it's my right. I'm his fiancée, so this is the least he can do for me. It is my right, so I should expect to get it. Yeah, it's expected. I have to take the next step in my relationship with him.'

I realized it the moment I saw Jung Ha-Yan's crazed expression. It was already too late.

However, it was still too early for me to use the *medicine* I had injected into her in Laios. I thought about taking back the right she had as my fiancée, but it would be a cheap move to take back what I had already given to her.

I also knew that if I were to take the rights she believed she rightfully owned, then there was a high chance that she would do something that would make things complicated for me.

"You said we were going to get married… *Heuuuk!*" Jung Ha-Yan sobbed.

While I was imagining a situation I didn't want to even imagine at all, Jung Ha-Yan looked aggrieved, as if she had been a victim of a scam. She was suspicious of me and was resenting Cha Hee-Ra, but this was actually a rare sight.

She wasn't being openly hostile. Jung Ha-Yan was simply trying to express her dissatisfaction.

"I'm busy…" I told her.

"You said that… we were going to get married. *Heuuk*. When are we going to get married… When… W-When?!" she screamed.

'She's raising her voice. She's really crazy… '

"Yelling like that won't resolve—"

"*Ugggggh*. I really don't like Cha Hee-Ra… I hate her. *Sooooo* much!" she yelled again.

'You provoked her first.'

The way she kept talking to herself was ridiculous. I couldn't really hear her, but I

was sure that she was muttering certain words to herself. Until now, I couldn't even begin to wrap my head around Jung Ha-Yan yelling at me, but I guess she was worked up this time.

'Should I yell at her?'

I could overpower her by yelling even louder than her.

I wanted to yell at her as if I were an eighth-generation noble born in the Joseon Dynasty, but I could see from her unyielding gaze that she would remain relentless, even in the face of the harshest torture.

'She's really scary.'

She looked like she would explode at any moment, and I was so shocked by the fact that she yelled at me to the extent that I almost yelled back at her.

"*Ugggh.*"

The way her arms were trembling as she bit her lips made me think that yelling at her wouldn't work because she would definitely not listen to me. Naturally, I thought about bringing Kim Hyun-Sung to suppress this scoundrel.

I wanted to take a step back to take a breather, but Jung Ha-Yan was holding onto the hem of my clothes rather tightly. If we were in a secret room, then I would have already pissed my pants.

'What should I do?'

I couldn't possibly inject her with an even stronger *medicine* because if I increased her expectations, then I would eventually reach a point where no medicine would work on her anymore because of her high tolerance.

I felt bad seeing Jung Ha-Yan staring at me with her big round eyes, so I had no choice but to think of a way to overcome all this in the meantime.

'Should I try comforting her like I did yesterday with Cha Hee-Ra? No, that won't work. It could completely fail.'

I could still remember how my entire body felt as a result of the seduction, so I didn't

really want to do it again, but…

'This is the only way.'

Cha Hee-Ra and I were the only ones on the griffon during that incident, but Jung Ha-Yan and I were standing in the middle of Lindel.

Similar to the unicorn incident, Jung Ha-Yan definitely wanted to maintain her *innocence*. Therefore, I was sure that she wouldn't be like Cha Hee-Ra and tackle me in the middle of Laios.

'And it has already been proven to be effective.'

The method was a bit different, but it should calm her down. I slowly moved away from Jung Ha-Yan, who had already buried her face into my chest. I saw her tear-stained eyes. I revealed an extremely *seductive* smile and kissed her.

"Don't cry, Ha-Yan," I said.

"*Heuuuuk*."

I pushed her hair back and started touching her ear.

"I told you that I'm in a bad situation right now. I also asked you to be more understanding when it comes to work-related things. I'll be in trouble if you continue to throw a tantrum like this," I said.

"*Ahh*…"

My touch wasn't anything grand, but it was enough to stimulate her five senses. As expected, Jung Ha-Yan blushed and started trembling. I actually got worried that she would collapse right there and then.

"*Ahhhhhh*…!" she moaned.

She definitely reacted better than I had expected. I got worried because she looked like she was holding in her pee by the way she was clenching her legs together, but the sight was definitely worthy of a nod from me.

"I want to get married to you as soon as possible, too. I just have no choice but to

wait because of the current situation. I've been thinking about you every day, and it has always made me feel like my heart is going to explode. Like this…" I told her.

My heart was racing because I was afraid. In addition to whispering sweet words into her ear, I also made sure to placate her by presenting a reasonable argument.

It wasn't that I hadn't been showering her with any physical affection all this time, but she was well aware that the quality of my physical affection this time was a bit different than usual because right now, I was trying my best to spread my pheromones.

"*Ah…!*" she moaned again.

I immediately realized that this was a mistake.

"*Haaa… Haaa… Ha*," she panted.

Her breathing was getting rough, and the way she was looking at me started changing in a strange way. For some reason, Jung Ha-Yan's skin started turning red as well, and she was squirming.

Her expression was also ambiguous because I wasn't sure if she was crying or smiling.

'This is a total—'

My vision suddenly narrowed and darkened.

'Huh? What's wrong with me?'

I was getting sleepy, and my legs were giving out. I tried to keep my heavy eyes open, but I couldn't stop myself from closing my eyes

'Did you do this, Jung Ha-Yan?'

I didn't really feel her mustering her mana, not to mention casting a spell. I wasn't sure if the backlash of what Cha Hee-Ra and I had done had finally arrived or if it was because of Jung Ha-Yan, but I slowly started falling forward.

And that was when Jung Ha-Yan whispered, "Y-Y-You must be really tired."

Her voice wasn't filled with madness like earlier. She looked genuinely worried, but I easily deduced her true intentions. After all, she wasn't even trying to hide the lust in her eyes.

"I-I'll take you to your r-room. You should rest for today. *Hehe. Heh. Hehehe,*" Jung Ha-Yan giggled.

"*Oh*, yeah. I'm suddenly… P-Potion…" I stuttered.

"I-I'll give you some, but l-lean on me for now," she said.

"Right now…" I requested.

"O-Okay…" she replied.

"…"

"…"

"Wake… up."

"…"

"Oppa, wake up. I thought you have a meeting to attend? What are you doing here?"

"Lee Ji-Hye?"

I didn't know what time it was, but I had to have been unconscious for quite a while since it was already bright outside. I thought I was with Jung Ha-Yan, but the person I saw was a shocked and worried Lee Ji-Hye.

She also looked like she had no idea what was going on.

'Why is she here instead of Jung Ha-Yan?'

"*Oh?* You're really up. I was just joking," Lee Ji-Hye said.

"W-What the… Was I asleep for a long time?" I asked.

"You've been sleeping for three days," she replied.

“What?”

“I said, you’ve been asleep for exactly three days. Are you really okay?” she asked.

“What are you talking about?” I asked.

“A templar visited from the Vatican,” she answered.

“What? A templar? Why?” I asked.

“I don’t know what’s going on over there either, but… they received a signal that you were in danger. They returned after being told that you’re fine, but it has been pretty chaotic here because of that. And all this happened while Elena was taking care of you…”

”Are you sure she can be trusted? Does it make sense that the person next to the priest was suddenly plunged into a life-threatening situation? It’s really strange no matter how I think about it,” she explained.

‘What is she talking about?’

“What about Elena? Actually, what is she doing right now?” I asked.

“I think she’s resting after the treatment. By the way, why does it smell like we’re in the forest here?” she asked.

“I’m not sure… Ha-Yan wasn’t here?” I asked.

“I told you that you have been asleep for three days. Half a day after Jung Ha-Yan brought you here, the elf princess came here after receiving news that you weren’t waking up…”

”Three hours later, the templar from the Vatican arrived. It was my first time seeing them, and they were really amazing,” she replied.

It had been quite a while since I became an honorary cardinal of the Vatican, but this was the first time a templar visited me for quite a while now. I had no idea what happened while I was asleep, but…

‘Elena?’

Why did Lee Ji-Hye mention her name?

Anyway, I was sure that I almost ended up dying and going over to Benigoa, and in a shameful way at that. If I had died, then it would have definitely become one of the most hilarious stories that could have existed. I felt bitter.

I unknowingly stared at Lee Ji-Hye, and she started moving closer to me.

“By the way, you look sexy today, oppa. You’re usually sexy, but you look even sexier today…” she remarked.

‘You, too?! Shit…!’

I was seriously cursing inside.

CHAPTER 432
RE: STARTING LIFE IN ANOTHER WORLD FROM ZERO (1)

I felt like I was finally familiar with what it would feel like to die from exhaustion. I didn't expect that I would be asleep for three whole days.

In addition, I became sure that what happened wasn't just a part of a comedy show. After all, even a templar appeared to check up on me. I was able to endure Cha Hee-Ra, but it seemed that Elena was Light Ki-Young's undoing.

Lee Ji-Hye was currently arranging her clothes while humming, and I was sure that she was in a good mood because she was moving to the rhythm of her hums. The way she pursed her red lips made her look sexy, and her gorgeous demeanor was tempting, too.

I couldn't afford to do anything because there was a huge chance that I might have to start another life. Was this what it felt like to have a cursed body? I was still finding it difficult to move, even though I drank a few potions.

I felt like I got hit by a Semi-Mythic debuff.

"All I did was sleep for three days?" I asked.

"Yeah. You were apparently extremely exhausted. The experts said that there aren't any major problems, and I guess that's normal because they even got you started on an IV line filled with potions…"

"In addition to the potions you made, the IV line contains something from the World Tree, so you should take advantage of this opportunity to become extremely healthy," Lee Ji-Hye suggested.

'That would be nice, Ji-Hye.'

"The templar looked around and muttered that they had made a mistake and left. It

was kind of strange how you kept on sleeping after that, but I guess you were truly exhausted both physically and mentally…"

"Anyway, what's wrong? Are you feeling sick? Should I call a priest?" asked Lee Ji-Hye.

"No, I'm still tired. I'm going crazy… Are you sure this contains something from the World Tree?"

"I just woke up, but I feel really exhausted. Maybe I was paralyzed rather than asleep? Are you sure that I'm not under a spell that constantly drains my energy?" I questioned.

"I think you're just getting old. Anyway, you seem full of energy today. Or maybe I'm just *that* charming?" she said.

"…"

"We're a good match. Don't you agree?" she asked.

I kept on nodding at Lee Ji-Hye's useless questions. I groped around the nightstand next to the bed, and I accidentally swept something away, causing it to fall to the floor.

[Visitor List]

[Lee Ji-Hye] 08:43 AM - 09:50 AM

[Cha Hee-Ra] 11:00 AM - 12:14 PM

[Jung Ha-Yan] 15:03 PM - 15:10 PM

[Elena] 18:05 PM - 20:02 PM

[Cha Hee-Ra] 22:23 PM - 23:03 PM

[Cha Hee-Ra] 05:02 AM - 06:04 AM

[Lee Ji-Hye] 08:23 AM - 09:10 AM

[Jung Ha-Yan] 09:21 AM - 09:29 AM

[Jung Ha-Yan] 10:55 AM - 11:05 AM

[Jung Ha-Yan] 12:11 PM - 12:22 PM

[Jung Ha-Yan] 15:42 PM - 15:52 PM

[Elena] 18:05 PM - 20:02 PM

[# # # # # #]

'What's this?'

I couldn't help but chuckle. I realized that I really had to be thankful that they had been consistently visiting me.

'I feel like crying. They actually care a lot about me.'

I was sure that they thought I needed time for myself and time to rest because there was a gap between the visits. Based on the log, Jung Ha-Yan's visits only lasted around ten minutes, which made me worry that she was suffering from premature ejaculation.

Cha Hee-Ra's visits often lasted around an hour, and even though Elena's visits weren't that often she had the longest visits, which lasted around two hours every time.

In addition, the fact that she would visit me at the same time every time meant that she had stabilized. Lee Ji-Hye's visits had become frequent as well, and the way she adjusted her schedule revealed her true personality.

I looked at Lee Ji-Hye quietly, and I saw her clearing her throat. I noticed that other people had visited me as well, but these four were my most frequent visitors. I did think about the possibility of them doing something strange to me, but…

'I'm sure they didn't do anything like that.'

They were crazy, but they wouldn't possibly do something like that, considering that I was a sleeping patient. I couldn't help but shake my head at the ridiculous idea.

After calming myself down, I started drinking another bottle of potion, which tasted and felt like the sweetest water out there for someone who had been looking for an oasis in the middle of a desert.

'I didn't choose to become an alchemist just to drink my own products. I'm supposed to sell them. I'm starting to regret it.'

"You're drinking a lot of potion," Lee Ji-Hye commented.

"It's like a restorative drink. It's like a tonic to me. I can really feel that I've gotten weaker while I was asleep," I said.

"I think that you have really been working too much recently. Don't you think it's time for you to take a break? With how much work you have been doing, it would actually be strange if you hadn't collapsed. Anyway, they said you're doing fine," she said.

"That's a relief," I commented.

"Still, you're going to receive an order not to overdo it in the next few days. You're an important figure. The continent was in chaos over the past few days because—wait, I think you already know about it," she added.

"Are you talking about the disappearance of quests and dungeons? I was the first person to have heard of that," I told her.

"*Hm*, so Father Basel was right. I think you were supposed to announce the news, but they couldn't go with that plan because you were asleep. Father Basel decided to deliver that news to the continent himself," she informed me.

"That's good. How did the public react?" I asked.

"What do you think?" she questioned.

"*Hm*…"

“Of course, the continent was plunged into chaos. I’m sure you already know, but Demon Summoner Jin Cheong ratted out the other demon servants all over the continent…”

”The Adventurer Guild is currently preparing to set out on an expedition to find the demon dungeon scattered all over the continent. As for us, well, we have Rift Land,” she said.

“That’s—”

“We’re getting ready to open it, oppa,” she interrupted.

“What? It’s done and ready?” I asked.

“On the day you fainted, Miss Cha Hee-Ra visited me herself and told me that we have to work on Rift Land as soon as possible. I had an idea about how you wanted it done, so I started working on it. Anyway, you don’t have any complaints about that, right?”

”Miss Kim Mi-Young helped a lot as well. She’s very competent,” she added.

“She’s competent, and I cherish her as well. I think I should give her a raise,” I said.

“Please give her a raise and a reward. The Blue Guild provided thirty percent of the funds, while the Red Mercenary Guild provided sixty percent. The Black Swan Guild provided five percent, and Kasugano Yuno provided the other five percent…”

“The dwarves, Max, and the mages in Lindel helped by setting up a distribution network and building the minimum infrastructures necessary for everything to function. To be honest, it’s embarrassing to call it a commercial district with how bare it looks…”

“Anyway, I’m sure it’ll be better for you to see it yourself,” said Lee Ji-Hye.

“I know it’s great that we’re working fast, but this is too fast,” I told her.

“We simply followed the framework Max has prepared for a long time. There is still a lot of work that had to be done outside, but the museum itself is functioning properly,” she added.

'I guess that makes sense.'

Of course, the preparations would still take a day or two.

I looked at Lee Ji-Hye and nodded.

'Yeah, you're really awesome. As expected, we're a match made in heaven.'

I really couldn't wrap my head around how she knew exactly what I wanted, and she started to look lovely in my eyes once more.

"You look satisfied." Lee Ji-Hye pointed out.

"Of course. Thanks, noona," I said.

"So I can get one as well, right? She asked.

"What?" I asked.

"The Inxity Stone on Cha Hee-Ra and Jung Ha-Yan's finger… I mean, that ring. I want one, too. It's annoying that I'm the third one, but I think I'm qualified to have one, right? I won't wear it around, so don't worry about it," she requested.

"*Ah*, yeah…"

I couldn't really refuse her.

'I don't have a reason not to give her one.'

When I recalled the things Lee Ji-Hye had done so far, she was more than qualified to receive a ring from me. The following scene wasn't romantic at all because I was still lying in bed, but I retrieved a ring with a yellow Inxity Stone acting like a diamond and placed it on her finger.

Lee Ji-Hye looked indifferent as I put the ring on her, but she started giggling at the sight of the ring on her finger. At the sight of that, I was sure that she was starting to feel better.

"Since you can already walk, how about we go out and eat?" she suggested.

“I can walk. Anyway, are you going to stay here, noona?” I asked.

“I’ve gotten really busy preparing for the opening of Rift Land. It has been a while since I visited my guild, so people might start thinking that I’ve become a member of the Blue Guild,” she replied.

“*Mmhm*…” I stood up while nodding. I was actually surprised that my body was functioning properly and walking made me feel like I was getting healthier with every step. Upon walking outside, the people outside started greeting me.

They wore shocked faces as they gave me various items related to improving my health, but the one who stood out the most among the crowd was Elena. She kept hesitating from afar, and it was funny she looked like she was extremely guilty.

‘Why is she acting like that? What did she do?’

Elena lowered her head, and her ears turned red. It was a sight that was a bit distant from her usual demeanor. I wanted to talk to her about my current physical condition, but I was disappointed because she started running away.

I also noticed something strange.

‘Where are the others?’

“Where did all the Blue Guild members go?” I asked.

“Where do you think? Of course, they’re at the museum. I told you that we’re doing the final touches as we speak. Deok-Gu oppa woke up two days ago, and he joined us right away. I’m sure the Red Mercenary Guild members are there as well. They actually left this morning, so it’s a bit unfortunate,” she replied.

“Have you been promoting it?” I asked.

“Yes, we have been promoting Rift Land. There’s no way this is going to fail because it’s a substitute for the dungeons that disappeared, but you know that better than I do, so…” she trailed off.

We arrived at the restaurant, and we started talking once again while Lee Ji-Hye was munching on the appetizers.

“It’s just a blueprint, but I still want you to take a look…” Lee Ji-Hye requested.

I started eating as well, and I inspected the blueprint of Rift Land while eating.

‘It’s not bad… ’

I should be able to trust the blueprint if this were the work of Kim Mi-Young and Lee Ji-Hye. I would have to see it myself if I wanted to see the details, but what they had done was basically what I had in mind.

I had no idea how the public would view Rift Land, but the blueprint deserved an applause from me.

‘It’s exactly like I imagined it to be… ’

Rift Land was made in a way that would maximize the common people’s spending.

“I don’t think I need to take a look…” I told her.

“No, you have to take a look because we need your opinion. Maybe you want to see it for yourself?” she asked.

“Can I do that?” I asked.

“What kind of dumb question is that? You’re the manager of Rift Land. Still, it won’t be good for you to just waltz in there, so why not disguise yourself as one of the common people and experience it?”

”It’ll also be a good change of pace as well. It’s divided into Beginner’s Course, Advanced Course, and Intermediate Course. The ranks are Rare, Epic, and Legendary,” she suggested.

“I wonder if that’s fine…” I mumbled.

I felt stiff, but I wasn’t really busy. I thought I would be *really* busy upon arriving at Lindel, but the people around me were competent enough to carry me all the way until we were about to open Rift Land.

In addition, I also wanted to escape my current situation.

'It'll probably be less dangerous if I enter a dungeon.'

I started considering it as I drank another bottle of Fatigue Recovery Potion.

"I think it's a good idea," I said.

"Really?" she asked.

"Of course," I replied.

"I just wanted to see your reaction. I didn't expect that you would agree. Then… should I prepare a party for you?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"No, there's no need. There should be a lot of parties in the plaza, and I don't think I will have any trouble finding one for myself," I answered. I wanted to know just how much money Rift Land was siphoning from the working class.

However, the only way for me to know for sure was to be in the shoes of the working class and experience it for myself.

CHAPTER 433
RE: STARTING LIFE IN ANOTHER WORLD FROM ZERO (2)

I inspected myself briefly. If I were to dilly-dally, then there was a huge chance that I might not find a party for myself. Lee Ji-Hye seemed surprised as she watched me check my luggage. It was clear that she didn't expect me to act like this.

"Wait, you're really going there? Why don't you just rest here?" Lee Ji-Hye suggested.

"I told you that I wanted to take a look. I'm somewhat nervous since we opened the place in a rush before sending in testers. I need to figure out the exact issues as they appear," I told her.

"Since when have you been so passionate?" she asked.

"It's just *that* important," I said.

Of course, that wasn't the only reason why I was suddenly going on an expedition, but it was a huge part of it. I knew Lee Ji-Hye and Kim Mi-Young had done a good job, but they couldn't do a deeper field inspection at all.

If they were the managers of the museum, then I could relax and let them take care of it, but Max and I were the only managers. Max was a Rank Five Manager while I was Rank Four.

In other words, I was the CEO of the museum, and it would be strange if the CEO of a big company didn't appear at the company's opening.

I didn't want to be careless because the fate of the continent would depend on the museum, but honestly, I was also being greedy.

I had to see if people were being reasonably charged, and it was important to siphon them dry in a way that wouldn't make them fall into despair. They had to be given constant hope that they would make a lucky break so that they would keep on

coming.

I also had to make them feel desperate so that the players would have no choice but to focus on their growth, and that was Rift Land's raison d'etre.

The Blue Guild's financial gain and the foreigners' desperation were important. It sounded easy, but there were a lot of sensitive parts, so the fact that I was about to check everything for myself wasn't really that strange.

"You're too famous. What are you going to do about it? You can only do so much with magic…" Lee Ji-Hye said.

"I'll just wear a simple disguise. My face is pretty ordinary anyway," I told her.

"Honestly, you don't have an ordinary face at all. Your features are distinct, but I think you'll look a bit different if you were to change your hairstyle and your equipment…"

"Honorary Cardinal Lee Ki-Young has a certain image about him, so I think you'll do fine if you just tweak your overall bearing and demeanor a bit…" Lee Ji-Hye suggested.

"…"

"No, that still won't work. You're too famous," she said.

"I told you that there's no need for us to go that far," I said.

"We might as well go all out. What about a mask? It'll make you look kind of suspicious, though…" she asked.

'Why would you say something like that?! Ji-Hye! Are you crazy? That would make me look like the masked scum!'

"I decline," I replied.

"You're right. I don't think people will be wary of you right off the bat. You're going to enter a rare-ranked dungeon, right? Or will it be an epic-ranked?" Lee Ji-Hye asked.

"Depends…"

“In that case, then you won’t be able to cast any magic because they’ll notice your holy power—*Ah!* Wait. There is a way. Wait here. I’ll be right back,” she said.

I thought it wouldn’t be so bad, so I nodded and watched Lee Ji-Hye heading somewhere. She looked as if she had thought of a great idea as she emerged out of a bathhouse. I wasn’t expecting much, but when I saw the solution she brought with her, my jaw dropped to the floor.

“This should work, right?” she asked.

“What?! Where did you get these?” I asked.

“We hid them when Miss Hye-Jin brought the unicorn over. It will work, right?” she replied.

“I-I think it should be fine, but…”

“You said the effect won’t last long anyway. I think this is perfect, so use this,” she interrupted.

“Yeah, it’s not bad,” I commented.

* * *

“Chul-Woo oppa?”

“…”

“Chul-Woo oppa!”

“*Oh*, Minji.”

“So, have you found anyone useful?” Minji asked.

“Not yet. It’s more like… I can’t see anyone useful. I knew finding a rearguard in Lindel was difficult, but it’s even more difficult when starting out from scratch…”

”Whenever I find someone decent, they would always be already in a party. In addition, our frontline isn’t that strong, so I’m sure the mages we want to recruit won’t want to join us. If I knew this was going to happen, I would have let mages join

the clan," I[1] replied.

"Easier said than done. If we let them and they don't grow, that'll be an even bigger problem for us, and there are a lot of people who look like mages on the outside… I wish someone like Jung Ha-Yan from the Blue Guild would show up. Then, we'd treat them really nicely…" Minji explained.

"Jung Ha-Yan is a really special case. I'd even take a mage from the Veteran Guild. Anyway, this crisis means that there aren't that many mages available," I told her.

"How about…" she paused.

"What?"

"How about we try applying for the expedition on the Demon Spire? I heard they provide a lot of supplies to their expedition members, and if we join the attack squad, it won't be hard for us to create a party from then on. If we were to become close to the mages on the same attack squad, we could discreetly offer them a place in our clan…"

"There's also the Magic Kingdom. I'm sure there are talented mages there…"

"We can't do that," I said, interrupting her.

"*Ah*…"

"It's still dangerous, and it's not a place we can join with our skill level," I told her.

"Who knows? I heard the Neighboring Tree Clan is heading toward the Demon Spire…" she commented.

"The dungeon could be Epic or above, so it'll be difficult for us since we just hit epic. Of course, it doesn't mean that we don't stand a chance at all, but I don't think there's a need for us to act rashly. I think it still won't be too late for us even If we go there after we're done accumulating experience from the Rift Museum," I explained.

Honestly, my feelings were betraying my words. I also thought about heading toward the Magic Kingdom. A party was necessary to access the Rift Museum, but the Demon Spire only required a ton of people, so there were a ton of openings.

I had somewhat of a connection with someone else there as well, and considering that they would give their expedition members a lot of supplies, the rewards were probably also much better.

Of course, we also had to consider our own supplies, but it was worth a try.

However…

'This isn't the right time.'

We were a squad of a clan, and the only dungeons we could enter were Epic dungeons.

If we entered an Epic dungeon above the Intermediate level, then there was a huge chance that accidents may occur.

The clan had enjoyed years of stability because of our innate cautiousness, and becoming too greedy had always been the undoing of many great people throughout history. Of course, the world had changed, but it should still be a reliable guideline.

"I knew you were going to say that," Minji commented.

"Thanks for understanding," I said.

"It's fine. Even Dae-Geon oppa said you would be against it. I just suggested it since we're in this situation. I wasn't expecting you to agree, anyway," she added.

"Dae-Geon said that?" I asked.

"Yeah. You guys really work well together like you two are constantly trying to prove that you guys are childhood friends. I get really jealous sometimes," she answered.

"*Hahaha*."

"Stop laughing. I wasn't joking around. There really are clan members that feel left out because the Clan Master and the Sub Clan Master are too close," she added.

"I feel bad that they feel that way… Should I apologize to them? By the way, where is Dae-Geon?" I asked.

“He’s at the pub looking for party members. I’m not sure if a mage who has been drinking since morning will be of any help in the expedition, but I’m sure he’s feeling desperate because we have to leave soon…”

”*Ugh*, there’s really no one here. Why did this have to happen at a time like this? Those demon servants… I want to capture them all and throw them into a fire pit. They just had to—”

“Not much we can do about it, and to be honest, it’s not all that bad,” I told her.

“What?” Minji asked.

“Even if the world hadn’t changed, there would still be no guarantee that we would get to acquire an epic dungeon for our own or even discover one for ourselves. The tutorial dungeon is about to open, and the entire continent will help the newcomers settle…”

“I’m sure the large guilds are focused on dungeon bidding because new players are necessary for the growth of their guild. In that sense, it would have still been nearly impossible for us to bid for an Epic dungeon with our lack of funds, and we also couldn’t rely on luck,” I explained.

“Makes sense…” she commented.

“We don’t have a lot of options, but at least we’re able to enter a dungeon. If the goddess is managing them herself, I’m sure they’re foreigner-friendly, and the large guilds announced that they would help the small to mid-sized clans. No matter how you look at it, this is a great opportunity,” I continued.

“You’re right,” she said.

“Don’t be so nervous. I’m sure there are one or two people who have the same idea as us,” I assured her.

“If we can’t find anyone after three hours…” she paused.

“It’s probably best if we head out. There could be mages who had gotten abandoned by their parties in front of the museum,” I answered.

“I hope so,” she commented.

Recruiting a mage in front of a dungeon was a dumb move, but I couldn't give up. I had to be desperate since this was a brand-new opportunity for us. Naturally, I had to speak with confidence.

"We're recruiting a mage for the Friendship Clan. We have a strong vanguard, and we have a priest as well. We're heading toward the Rift Museum, and we're looking for someone who will hunt with us in a fun and family-like environment!"

"We'll leave as soon as you join us. We're the Friendship Clan!"

"We're looking for a mage who wants to hunt, not get into fights! Our clan master really likes meeting people! Please join us!"

Gook Minji started shouting next to me. However, the parties in the square started yelling as well, and they soon drowned our voices.

I keep holding up our sign, but we were still having a difficult time finding a party member.

All of a sudden, I saw someone approaching us while holding a staff.

'Huh?'

Overall, she looked beautiful. Her sharp eyes, white skin, and lips as red as blood really stood out. She was covered in a robe from head to toe, and the way she was walking looked strangely awkward, as if she was injured.

I looked at her closely and saw her face.

'What kind of face is that?'

It would be an underestimation to describe her face with the word 'sexy'. Honestly, I was starting to wonder if succubuses could even compare to her in the looks department. In addition, her eyes were tantalizing and captivating, and they brought out this strange feeling of lust from within me.

Overall, she had an erotic demeanor. Erotic wasn't really a word that one would use to describe someone else's appearance, but it perfectly described her. I had met a lot of people so far, but I had never seen someone like her.

The sight of her visage alone made me blush.

The charming and mysterious woman finally arrived in front of me while I was staring at her as if I had been struck by a lightning bolt. She stared at me and opened her seductive lips.

“I… am a mage, but I’m a different type of mage. If that’s okay with you, could I join your party? I heard that you’re heading toward the Rift Museum.”

Her voice sounded so sexy that I had to do my best to hide the bulge on my crotch.

“I[2] should introduce myself first. Nice to meet you, members of the Friendship Clan. My name is Lee Ki-Yeon, and I’m a summoning mage.”

---

1. Lee Chul-Woo’s POV ☜

2. Lee Ki-Young’s POV ☜

CHAPTER 434
RE: STARTING LIFE IN ANOTHER WORLD FROM ZERO (3)

'This feels uncomfortable… '

I thought it was a good idea, so I accepted Lee Ji-Hye's suggestion. However, I felt uncomfortable even though I wasn't really wearing a dress. Walking felt awkward to me because my entire body had changed.

I was used to people looking at me, but the way people were looking at me had changed drastically compared to when I was Lee Ki-Young. The stares were bothering me, and I could see the drunkards looking at me from head to toe.

I wasn't really that annoyed because I could endure their gazes, but my mood undeniably soured.

'These bastards… '

All men were the same. Of course, that included me.

I looked to the side and saw my reflection in the mirror. I wouldn't say that I looked beautiful, but I definitely looked charming.

'Yeah… I'm satisfied.'

With my appearance, people should be friendly to me. In that case, it shouldn't be difficult for me to find a party. One's appearance seemed like it wasn't important when looking for a party, but it was actually important.

It was similar to how companies would find the interviewee's appearance important.

Of course, famous adventurers could be excluded from the appearance bias, but expedition parties were different because one would have to fight alongside people whom one had just met for the first time.

In addition, one would also have to rely on them in unexpected situations. Therefore, people with the demeanor and appearance of a scammer or even a serial killer would be hard-pressed to find parties that would accept them.

In that sense, Lee Ki-Yeon barely made the cut. I started walking while nodding, and I could finally see the people in the square.

'Who should I go with… '

It was important to look around. Unfortunately, I had never experienced this type of hardship before, so I was starting to feel out of breath.

'Finding a party must be difficult… '

Of course, I immediately realized that it didn't apply to me.

"We're looking for vanguards to go hunting with us!"

"We're looking for an archer who's willing to go on an expedition to a goblin village nearby! We need someone with excellent eyesight, and we'll leave as soon as you join!"

Expedition parties for Rift Land weren't the only people looking for other people in the square.

"I'm a rare-ranked assassin. I'll go anywhere as long as you recruit me. I have a lot of experience, and I can do a decent amount of damage. I'm different from the other assassins. Please recruit me! I won't need healing, either! I'll keep quiet and wrap myself in bandages!"

"I'm an epic-ranked hunter! I'll help you hunt! We're looking for clan members to join us! Please!"

There were a lot of individuals looking for parties unrelated to Rift Land expeditions, actually, there were a lot more individuals than parties. The majority of the people who were yelling had thief-related jobs.

'Looking at them now, they look like they're part of the lower class, but this isn't new information for me.'

In a square pyramid, they were at the bottom. Higher in the pyramid were priests, mages, and useful tanks. The fact that there was a small pool of mages was the most impressive. It was kind of surprising since the Blue Guild never had to worry about mages, but it was easy to deduce what was going on. If this world were a game, then this wouldn't have happened.

Unlike in games where one could cast magic with a press of a button, magic spells and the concept of magic itself were considered academic expertise in this world. One had to be smart, and they had to be hardworking as well before they could be a mage.

Rare-ranked mages were rare on this continent. The majority of the epic-ranked mages were either members of a large guild or were considered high-quality freelance nomads.

Of course, there were also mages who only spent their days inside laboratories, and there were also mages who had never gone out to hunt even once because they were scared of going outside.

Mages obviously weren't having a hard time making a living. I could already deduce how mages were being treated in the current economy.

There were a ton of people with thief-related and assassin-related jobs, so there was a huge job gap between what were considered high-class jobs and them.

Naturally, this only applied to the public. The situation of the large guilds was different because they had no lack of talented mages.

Half of the people looking at me had obviously deduced that I was a mage because I was holding a staff only mages would wield.

"Excuse me, if you're above epic rank, what do you think about the Demon—"

"I'm sorry, but I'm not at that level yet," I replied.

"What about going on the field?"

"I'm sorry," I answered.

"Then rare-ranked raid monsters…"

“I’m sorry. Raid monsters are a bit…” I paused.

“How about we go somewhere quiet and have a cup of tea?” they suggested.

“I’m sorry,” I repeated.

“You’re really beauti—”

“I’m sorry.”

I felt like the conversation became strange toward the end of it, but everyone treated me just about the same. I could join any party I wanted.

Of course, I was just a mage on the outside, but I had nothing to fear with this staff. I felt a bit more relaxed when I realized that I was in a position where I could join any party, but the problem was that I couldn’t find a party with goals similar to mine.

‘This is a one-time thing… ’

And that was why I would like a party that would satisfy as many of my conditions as possible. I wanted a party with members who had just ranked up from Rare to Epic.

‘It’d be nice if they’re a bit rich and internally stable.’

They would be the perfect guests for Rift Land. People who had just ranked up from Epic to Legendary wouldn’t be so bad either, but I would have to reveal my hidden card if I wanted to join them, so they were out of the question.

While I was walking, I heard a voice with a message that stood out.

“We’re recruiting a mage for the Friendship Clan. We have a strong vanguard, and we have a priest as well. We’re heading toward the Rift Museum, and we’re looking for someone who will hunt with us in a fun and family-like environment!”

”We’ll leave as soon as you join us. We’re the Friendship Clan!”

‘Friendship Clan?’

“We’re looking for a mage who wants to hunt, not get into fights! Our clan master really likes meeting people! Please join us!”

'He likes meeting people?'

Obviously, I had never heard of that clan. It was a bit strange that I still hadn't heard of them because they could be considered a decent guild, even in Lindel. Their stats were decent as well.

'Lee Chul-Woo and Gook Minji.'

It was interesting how a priest was a clan master. The girl yelling next to him had a thief-related job. The name of her job was pretty long, but her stats were pretty average, so I decided to stop looking at her stats.

The stats they had were in the range of what I wanted, and the market was closing up pretty soon as well, so I thought that it wouldn't be bad to just choose them.

I started walking toward them, and the priest stared at me.

"I… am a mage, but I'm a different type of mage. If that's okay with you, will you allow me to join your party? I heard that you're heading toward the Rift Museum—*Ah!* I should introduce myself first. Nice to meet you, members of the Friendship Clan. My name is Lee Ki-Yeon, and I'm a summoning mage," I said.

"…"

"My name is Lee Ki-Yeon, a summoning mage," I repeated.

"…"

'What's wrong with him?'

"Excuse me? Can you hear me?" I asked.

"*Ah!* I-I'm sorry. S-So…"

"My name is Lee Ki-Yeon, and I'm a summoning mage," I said again.

"*Oh!* Nice to meet you, Miss Lee Ki-Yeon," Lee Chul-Woo said.

'He seems clumsy.'

It was a ridiculous sight to see him get flustered in front of me. He was an epic-ranked player, and those epic and above would have long abandoned their novice habits, so I got worried when I saw him panicking.

I couldn't help but get worried that I might have walked over to the wrong party, but the stats being reflected in Mind's Eye were correct. Lee Chul-Woo took a moment to compose himself. He cleared his throat and looked at me again.

"I'm sorry, I…"

"No, it's fine. By the way… may I join your party?" I asked.

"Before that… can you explain to me exactly what a summoning mage can do?" he asked.

'He's not clumsy.'

"*Ah*, I was being too hasty. Of course. I'm not sure what's the best way to describe it, but…" I paused.

"…"

"It'll be easier for you to understand if you think of it as a mix between a summoner and a mage. I can use average-ranked basic magic, but anything above that is a bit difficult…"

"However, if I were to overdo it, I could cast up to rare-ranked spells. My specialty is summoning magic, but it's impossible for me to go around with the summoned creature for a long period of time…"

"It won't last for a long time, but it can deal enough damage," I added.

"*Hm*…"

"Is that not enough?" I asked.

"No, that's not it, but I do need to get permission from the other party members. Of course, we're really thankful that you decided to join us, but since you're not an ordinary mage…" he said.

'Ha… shit. Discrimination against special jobs is prohibited, you bastard.'

"I have an epic-ranked job, and it hasn't been long since I changed jobs. My stats are also epic-ranked," I added.

"I see…"

'This is why ordinary parties are so annoying… '

Based on his nature and unique habit, he seemed like a close-minded person. I didn't think that it was going to be a big deal, so it was a ridiculous sight to see him contemplate so much about it.

Of course, I understood his concern as the party leader, but it was pretty frustrating on my side because the number of people in the square was gradually decreasing while I was waiting for his response.

'So, can I join or not?'

I wanted to tell him to forget it and turn around, but I had no other choice but to wait because it seemed that players with special jobs were being treated differently. I was sure that I would be treated the same if I were to try and join a different party.

'I'm not a mage nor a summoner, so I'm sure they need to think about it.'

Even I had to admit that my job was pretty ambiguous.

"I-Is it not fine? I really need to go there… *Ha*. What should I do?" I commented.

"Of course, it's fine."

It was good news, but I heard a voice behind me rather than in front of me. I looked back and saw a warrior with a shield and a blunt weapon.

'Kim Tae-Geon?'

He was a typical warrior with high endurance and stamina.

Before I could greet him, Lee Chul-Woo welcomed Kim Tae-Geon, and they started talking without me.

“Tae-Geon.”

“There’s a saying about how the system doesn’t lie. She has an epic-ranked job, and her stats fit what we need, so there’s no need to think about it. Going out there and doing something is better than staying here…”

”We can hear the details while heading toward the destination, and if we think that she’s not suitable for our party, then we can just pay her an inconvenience fee,” Tae-Geon suggested.

“I’m sure you won’t be disappointed,” I chimed in.

“Then…”

Lee Chul-Woo nodded in satisfaction, and I was about to revel in my success, but Gook Minji next to him looked displeased. In addition, what she said next was so absurd I had to take a second look at her.

“I’m against it.”

‘Geez, what’s wrong with her?’

“I understand what you’re saying, but… I don’t think this is right,” she added.

It seemed that it was extremely hard to make a living in Lindel.

‘We’re both women. Shit. Come on, work with me here…!’

CHAPTER 435
RE: STARTING LIFE IN ANOTHER WORLD FROM ZERO (4)

“Am I… not enough?” I asked.

“What’s wrong, Minji?”

‘Yeah, what’s wrong? What did I do wrong? Can’t I go on hunts as well? Huh? Can’t I go to dungeons, too?’

“She obviously doesn’t have much experience. Am I wrong?” Minji asked.

‘What kind of bullshit is this? There isn’t another person with as much experience as me.’

Of course, the type of experience was a *bit* different.

“Your muscles in your arms and legs are average. Your hands are too soft, and your nails are in good shape…”

”No matter how I look at it, you’ve never been on an expedition before. I don’t know how you have been living so far and how you have sourced your personal supplies, but… that bag is Chanelia Hermes, right?”

”It’s a bag from a luxury brand, and it’s just an impractical piece of trash that only looks good,” she continued.

‘What are you talking about? My Hyun-Sung gave this to me as a gift, you bitch! It’s an infinity bag. It’s not a piece of trash. You’ll never be able to own this even if you were to work your entire life.’

“Who in their right mind would carry around a luxury bag like that during an expedition? It looks nice on the outside, but it’s completely useless. You’re not going to a dungeon to seduce guys. You should’ve prepared at least the minimum. You’re a

mage, but you shouldn't rely on others for personal supplies…"

"Am I wrong? We can provide a tent, but it's good manners to only look for parties once you have prepared the basics necessary for an expedition, Miss Lee Ki-Yeon…"

"Chul-Woo oppa and Tae-Geon oppa are skilled players, and I'm sure you know that as well. I also can't believe that you put on makeup. I don't know who you're trying to impress, but you're obviously going to be a nuisance here…"

"Who would put on makeup when going on an expedition? Are you going to wake up early every day and put on makeup?" she asked.

'W-What the hell is wrong with her? She's crazy! What's wrong with you? Why are you on edge?'

She wasn't wrong, but I couldn't nod in agreement.

"I-I didn't put on makeup. I didn't put on anything," I commented.

"…"

"…"

"…"

"What?"

"I didn't put on makeup. You'll see if you look closely…" I told them.

"Then, your lips and skin, and the mascara on your lashes…" Minji pointed out.

"I don't have anything on. You can take a closer look," I offered.

The infinity bag…

'I can't reveal what's inside the bag… '

"I'm sorry about the bag. I've been stuck in the research lab for a long time, so this is the only thing I have to carry around with me. I got rid of all the items I thought were useless before coming out of the lab…"

”I didn’t know that things would turn out this way… I-I’m also going through some stuff,” I explained.

“But still…”

“I don’t have a lot of expedition experience, but I think I can do my best. No, if you trust me, I’ll do my best. I’ll make sure I don’t become a nuisance. Please,” I begged.

“How many times?” she asked.

Light Ki-Young had some muscles, but Lee Ki-Yeon was thin.

Clearing an epic-ranked dungeon was impossible with this body, not to mention a legendary-ranked dungeon. They weren’t going to believe me anyway, so I had no choice but to create a convincing story.

“I’ve been to about three rare-ranked dungeons. I have experience in the field,” I replied.

“Lies. Your body doesn’t scream experience…” she said.

‘You bitch! Is this some kind of public hearing?’

“I can’t do anything if you don’t believe me, but I’m telling the truth. It’s just been a while,” I said.

It really felt like a public hearing, and at this point, people would usually give in, so I had no idea why she was attacking me like this. In addition, who would want to join an expedition party with a party pooper? If both parties weren’t desperate, then we would have long been pulling each other’s hair.

‘Alright, fine. I’ll back down.’

If I were in her position, I wouldn’t want to accept me as a party member either. The ants of Lindel were living more fiercely than I thought, and I could understand it because their lives were at stake. To be honest…

‘It’s my mistake.’

There was a useless misunderstanding in the makeup part, but it was a huge mistake

that I wore the infinity bag rather than a backpack.

'I had no idea… I have been living a really privileged life. Ki-Yeon, you bitch!'

I had never worn a backpack after my very first expedition. I had always been carrying the essentials and basic tools I needed inside the Chanelia Hermes bag.

Before I had acquired the Chanelia Hermes bag, either Park Deok-Gu or a guild staff member would carry my necessities for me.

I couldn't even remember my rookie days anymore. In addition, my rookie days were vastly different compared to the rookie days of average players. They had to survive in a dungeon with basically nothing, but I started off with decent pay.

Moreover, I was already a veteran in this field, so there was no way I would understand their mindset.

'Ha… Did I make a mistake? I did.'

I had no other excuses, so I had no choice but to let them decline Lee Ki-Yeon. I wanted to join a different party, if possible, but I had to have gotten here too late because the recruitment market was already about to close.

I looked at Gook Minji and acted pitifully, but her cold look didn't change.

'She's determined not to let me join.'

I was sure that she wouldn't budge, so I had no other choice but to direct my gaze at someone else.

I stared at Lee Chul-Woo without saying anything. I looked at him as if I was desperate to get accepted, and it seemed that it was working.

'He was friendly to me right off the bat. Niceeeeeee. Let's go Ki-Yeon!'

"Stop cornering her like that, Minji. I'm sorry, Miss Lee Ki-Yeon. I'll apologize in her place," he said.

"*Huh?*"

“She’s a nice kid, but she sometimes gets worked up like this. The fact that you aren’t prepared with the basic supplies is kind of surprising to me as well, but… I trust that you have your reasons,” he continued.

‘This is what I’m talking about.’

“Then…”

“You can come with us. What do you think, Tae-Geon?” he asked.

“I agreed from the start. Minji, stop pouting like that. I understand what you’re worried about, but… she has nothing to lose. We should be really thankful about having a mage join us in this expedition,” Kim Tae-Geon said.

“B-But…”

“Apologize to her first,” he told Minji.

The two men looked at the rude bitch without saying anything. In the end, she raised the white flag.

“I’m sorry. I was rude,” Minji said.

“It’s fine. I completely understand. The expedition won’t be long, but I look forward to working with you,” I told her.

“We look forward to working with you as well, Miss Ki-Yeon. What are you doing, Chul-Woo? Give her the temporary party contract,” he said.

“Do I have to sign a contract?” I asked.

“It’s just part of the formal process,” he replied.

‘I’m surprised.’

The clauses involved punishment for trolling, desertion, and a few others things. It also included reward distribution.

I was sure it wouldn’t be that legally binding because events in dungeons were mostly hidden from prying eyes unless we decided to run the goddess’ mirrors

around the clock.

I thought it would be safe to assume that the contract was more of a way to make the player aware.

There was a small issue, but I still succeeded. At this point, I was curious about their personal information and details.

“It won’t be just the four of us, right?” I asked.

“Yes, we have three more comrades joining,” Lee Chul-Woo replied.

Perfect…

“They’re probably getting ready to leave from the dorm,” he added.

“I see. Where’s the clan house located? In the western region?” I asked.

It’s… kind of embarrassing, but we don’t have a place we can call a clan house just yet. We thought that buying equipment first is the most important…” he answered.

“*Ah*…”

“This is embarrassing,” he said.

“No, it was a really good decision because you’re trying to become better. There aren’t many people who would invest in equipment right off the bat, so you made the right choice. So that’s why your equipment is so shiny. Your robe is epic-ranked, right? The quality looks really good…” I complimented him.

“No, it’s rare-ranked,” he answered.

“It probably looks epic-ranked in my eyes because it looks good on you. *Hehe*,” I giggled.

“B-B-By the way, how long has it been since you arrived, Miss Ki-Yeon?” he asked.

“It hasn’t been that long. About two years… it’ll be three years soon. How about you and Mr. Dae-Geon?” I asked.

“It’s been four years for us,” he replied.

‘It hasn’t been that long… Not bad.’

The fact that they were qualified to challenge an epic-ranked dungeon, even though it was just their fourth year here, meant that they had grown fast. On average, players would need about six to seven years to reach stats similar to the people of this party.

It should be safe to assume that they had a clear vision and goal in mind as they climbed their way up here from the bottom.

I obviously thought that I had picked the right people. I usually wouldn’t have this thought, but I had a feeling that I would see them again in a higher-ranked dungeon after some time. I guess it wouldn’t hurt to remember their faces.

We were members of the same expedition party, so it wasn’t weird for me to chuckle in the most pleasant way possible at their jokes and remarks. The two men had to be used to entertaining people because they knew how to give compliments, and their smiles were bright as well.

Gook Minji still looked satisfied, but I wasn’t really sure why. Fortunately, it seemed that she had significantly calmed down compared to earlier.

“I’ll let you borrow the basic supplies,” Lee Chul-Woo offered.

“Is that okay?” I asked.

“Yes. Our clan always carries around plenty of supplies. We can prepare an additional bag for you,” he replied.

“I’d be thankful if you could do that. I feel like I’ve been in your debt since the beginning, so I feel bad,” I commented.

“Don’t worry about it. We’re a team,” he said.

“You’re so cool and reliable. I feel so safe,” I told him.

It seemed that compliments were always effective. I smiled at him and saw the corner of his lips going up. It seemed that the compliment I used to melt Father Basel

seemed like it was still effective.

We walked a bit faster, and we eventually saw a small house. He definitely wasn't lying when he said that they still didn't have a clan house because the small house could never be considered a clan house.

It seemed that most of their members spent their time here.

Lee Chul-Woo told me to wait and walked inside. I saw three women nearby.

'An archer, a melee swordsman, and a fighter.'

I wasn't sure if it was just me, but they seemed like they didn't like me very much. I greeted them while showing my special friendly smile, but they simply nodded at me.

They only greeted me when Kim Tae-Geon introduced me to them.

"This is Miss Ki-Yeon, and she'll be joining us on the upcoming expedition. She's a summoning mage, has three years' worth of experience, and has recently become an epic-ranked player."

"A special job?"

'Why are you looking at me like that?'

"I am looking forward to working with you, Miss Ki-Yeon."

"I am looking forward to working with you as well," I said.

"It's amazing that you already have an epic job despite only having three years' worth of experience."

"I was just lucky…" I told them.

They had the same expression as Gook Minji earlier. They were looking down on me—no, they were clearly mocking me.

'What would a bunch of rookies know? This unni will show you how it's done later, you bitches. I'll show you the power of a Semi-Mythic job!'

Once they witnessed and felt the aura of a Semi-Mythic job, I was sure that these bitches would look at me in a new light. However, my determination was quickly destroyed because I made a mistake by looking down on their abilities.

'Shit… Can't we just ride a carriage? Why are we walking? You guys have a carriage, so why walk? You don't have money to afford that?'

"*Ah… Ugh…*"

'This is heavy. Really heavy. I don't think I'll be able to carry this into the dungeon. I feel like my shoulders… are going to get destroyed. Deok-Gu, carry my stuff for me. Where are you, Deok-Gu? I miss you, Park Deok-Gu!'

"*Ha… Ha… Ugh…*"

I couldn't help but keep on groaning. I was doing my best to stop my ragged breaths, but I couldn't do it.

'Why the hell aren't we resting? Let's take a break, please. Let's drink some water, you bastards.'

"*Haaaaa.*"

'My back. My shoulders! Lee Ki-Yeon is dying, you assholes!'

"*Haa… Ah… ahhh!!*"

"Do you need help?"

The female clan members started looking at me with contempt once again.

CHAPTER 436
RE: STARTING LIFE IN ANOTHER WORLD FROM ZERO (5)

"*Ah… Ha…*"

"…"

"*Ha. Ha. Haaa*."

"…"

"*Haaaaaa.*"

"…"

'Ha… '

The sounds Lee Ki-Yeon was making were making even the other women blush. It was so ridiculous that I[1] wanted to speak out, but I couldn't say anything after hearing Chul-Woo oppa's warning.

I had no other choice but to hold back my complaints.

'Just watching her makes me feel really annoyed. Is she crazy? She's doing that on purpose, right? I'm a hundred percent sure.'

It was true that I didn't have a good feeling about her since I saw her, and my assumption was right. I had to be right since she was standing there with her luxury bag and a face covered in makeup, even though she said she wasn't wearing any makeup.

'She definitely is wearing makeup. Who is she trying to fool?'

There was a chance that the guys wouldn't notice, but there was no way she could

fool the girls. I was sure that she was the type of woman who considered looking good in the eyes of the other sex more important than preparing for expeditions.

Actually, it would have been better if that was all she was. I could endure it if she only did something sly or remained unfriendly because people like that were a dime a dozen in Lindel.

Unfortunately, she wasn't like that, and actually, people like her were rare.

'That lying bitch. Does it even make sense for her to have three years' worth of experience when it comes to expeditions, particularly epic-ranked dungeons? What is she trying to say? That she's the successor of the Blue Guild's Jung Ha-Yan?'

'If she's that great, then why is she not in a large guild?'

I wasn't saying that she was lying since she wasn't dumb enough to lie about her abilities, and I was sure that she had entered epic-ranked dungeons before based on her stats and job.

The issue was *how* she became an epic-ranked player. I couldn't see a scratch on her hands and legs, which showed that she had been living a privileged life. Even worse, she lacked knowledge about the basics. It seemed like it was her first time seeing a temporary party contract, and she didn't even know the basics of what a mage had to do.

I was sure that she had entered a dungeon before.

'The issue is that she had never fought before.'

At this point, the answer was obvious. She had neither the skills nor connections, so there was only one way she could have grown this much.

'An executive of a large guild is probably sponsoring her… '

To be exact, she definitely had a sponsor. I was sure she was an old man's trophy, and she had been enjoying benefits that had made her life convenient.

She was probably allowed entry to small and mid-sized expeditions and was carried by her past expedition party members so that she would gain experience points.

Naturally, she came to possess her current abilities with the help of her sponsor. I was sure that was the case because it was proven by her current actions. In addition, a sponsor would also explain her suspicious actions so far.

'Summoning mage, my ass!'

There was a chance that she really *did* choose to become a Mage as her first job, but her slow and dumb brain probably couldn't keep up with the mental strain of being a mage because her affinity with summoned creatures was low.

She had been a bit too ambitious by choosing the mage job. She definitely had to change jobs after being carried by her party mates. In the end, the system probably wasn't able to find a suitable job for her.

She had been living a comfortable life, so the only knowledge she possessed was superficial knowledge. Her name sounded sweet, but I was sure that she didn't have any unique job skills. She was definitely nothing else but a ticking time bomb.

'It's obvious.'

I could also deduce the reason she was here.

'The executive who had been showering her with affection had probably abandoned her.'

Of course, I had no idea what happened between her and her sponsor. However, I was sure that she was desperate to receive a luxury bag, and it probably sparked an argument between them.

She probably got kicked out with nothing on her aside from that luxury bag, and she had to figure out where to find a place to sleep and eat. It was absurd that she chose to go on an expedition rather than work in the red-light district.

I was sure that she definitely wasn't interested in the expedition at all. She was definitely looking for a decent man to settle with, and her target was surely Chul-Woo oppa and Tae-Geon oppa. It made more sense seeing what she was doing.

"Do you need help?"

Dummy.

"*Ha. Ugh. Huh?* Do you mind? I feel like I'm being too much of a nuisance…" Lee Ki-Yeon said.

"I was actually worried because you seemed like you aren't used to this kind of travel. You can give me your bag. There's no need to decline since party members should help each other out," Lee Chul-Woo replied.

"But… I feel really bad for giving this to you…" she said.

"It's fine, Miss Ki-Yeon," he told her.

"No, you really don't have to, Mr. Chul-Woo. It's very shameful for me to ask…" she declined.

'You say that, but you're smiling.'

"This is better than having you faint during battle. Please worry about your stamina, Miss Ki-Yeon," he said.

"Well, when you put it like that… Thank you, Mr. Chul-Woo. I appreciate your kindness," she said.

"You don't have to feel bad about it. Everyone knows that mages would always struggle when it comes to physical exertion," he added.

"I appreciate your consideration."

In the end, Chul-Woo oppa and Tae-Geon oppa held her bag, and the way she started stretching made it look as if she had done this before. In addition, it was ridiculous how she was still holding onto her Chanelia Hermes bag.

Something started boiling inside me when I saw that…

I was sure that the other three women felt the same way as me.

"That woman…" I said.

"Have you seen her before, unni?"

"No. I've never seen her near our place before, but isn't it obvious?" I asked.

“It is. People really don’t change. Is she not ashamed of herself? She thinks the power she obtained is actually *her* power. She doesn’t know her place…”

“That’s what I’m saying. I don’t know why she suddenly appeared here and is doing all that nonsense. I think she got abandoned by her sponsor.”

“I think she’s trying to hook up with a decent man in our clan and act like she’s the madam of our clan once she succeeds. Such methods are popular these days, and they are done by women who want to erase and forget their shameful pasts…”

“I don’t know where she heard the rumors, but Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon of the Friendship Clan are steadily becoming even more valuable as we speak. To be honest, they’re great guys…”

“One is a warrior while the other is a priest. They also voluntarily chose not to join a large guild rather than being rejected. Their futures are promising. People like her would often scheme in a way that would make it seem like it would be justifiable for them to stay by their side all the time…”

“The way she acted earlier was ridiculous as well. She kept on telling them how cool and reliable they were while smiling. Our innocent Chul-Woo oppa smiled at her, too! It’s bad if a person is too nice…”

“I really couldn’t wrap my head around what kind of people would fall for women like her, but after seeing Chul-Woo oppa’s reaction, I think I understand it now.”

“You sound kind of dejected. Have you tried talking to them?” I asked.

“I did bring it up to the guys before leaving, but they said that she didn’t seem like that type of person. They even scolded me and told me to stop being suspicious of her.”

“Oh, my gosh, really? She’s definitely that type of person,” I commented.

“You want to hear something funnier?”

“What?” I asked.

“If this expedition goes well, I think they’re planning on recruiting that woman into the clan. It doesn’t make sense. I’m sure that won’t happen, but I can’t imagine

having to see that woman every day. This is a serious issue."

"Are you serious? That's not right," I said.

"I know. It really doesn't make sense."

"How about you try talking to Lee Ki-Yeon?" I suggested.

"What?"

"It's up to you, but you can tell her something similar to a threat or give her a warning. If that woman really grew because she had a sponsor, how could we proceed with this expedition? I won't be able to relax at all," I replied.

"You're right, b-but what if the expedition gets canceled? Chul-Woo oppa was really looking forward to this expedition…"

"You have a point, but I can't keep watching her behave like that. Women like her are the reason why men often look down on us. Shouldn't you act like an adventurer if you're going on an expedition?"

"But she keeps on complaining about her heavy bag, and the people here won't really protect you just because you're a woman…"

"Look at people like Miss Cha Hee-Ra. She's trying so hard to show that she's a woman, and she uses that to her advantage. That's why this is a problem," I explained.

"It's seriously annoying."

A conversation was interrupted by an announcement from Lee Chul-Woo.

"We'll take a break."

"Already?" I asked.

"Yeah, just for a moment. I'm getting kind of tired. I'm sorry. Sorry, Tae-Geon," he said.

"It's fine. I actually wanted to rest as well. I don't think we should set up a camp, but

we should find a spot to eat some snacks…" Kim Tae-Geon suggested.

'They're too nice as well, and it's becoming a problem.'

Everyone knew that we were taking a short break not because of Chul-Woo oppa. It was all because of that Lee Ki-Yeon. Chul-Woo oppa was just too nice, and he actually responded to Lee Ki-Yeon's complaints about how she was already tired.

I quietly glanced at Chul-Woo oppa and saw him handing over a cup of water to that woman.

'He's a real dummy.'

Lee Ki-Yeon's smile at Chul-Woo oppa was obnoxiously noticeable as well as she received the cup of water that Chul-Woo oppa handed over to her.

I couldn't help but think that my assumptions were most likely correct when I saw Chul-Woo oppa's flushed face.

'Ha!'

And what happened next was ridiculous…

"*Oh,* no…!"

"Are you alright?" Lee Chul-Woo asked.

The water just happened to spill all over that bitch's chest.

"I'm sorry, I'm so clumsy. Actually, I'm so tired since last night. I'm usually not like this… I'm really sorry. By the way, can I borrow your handkerchief?" Lee Ki-Yeon asked.

"Y-Yes, of course," he replied.

"I'll return this to you after washing it. Would it be okay to use this to wipe off my sweat?" she asked.

"Y-Yes, that's fine," he answered.

'Ha.'

My eyes felt like they would spew fire.

"One moment…"

"Sure."

"I'll be right back as well, unni."

"Yeah, go easy on her," I told them.

Naturally, I followed them as well.

I wasn't really going to threaten her like what I suggested in my conversation with the other girls earlier, but I had to say something to relieve this anger in my heart. I walked over to where Lee Ki-Yeon was sitting, and she smiled brightly at me as I approached.

"Miss Minji, is something wrong?" she asked.

"There's something I'd like to ask," I replied.

"I'll answer if I can…" she said.

"Who was it?" I questioned.

"What?"

"The Black Swan? Blue Guild? Red Mercenary Guild? Or another guild? It's definitely a large guild. They're above a mid-sized guild, right? Do people still do that? It seems that even a large guild doesn't lack shitty men," I asked.

"I don't understand what you're asking…" she said.

"I know everything, so stop playing dumb," I told her.

"What are you asking exactly?" she asked.

"Who sponsored you?" I asked.

At last, I felt like I had relieved my frustration.

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1. Gook Minji's POV ☜

CHAPTER 437
RE: STARTING LIFE IN ANOTHER WORLD FROM ZERO (6)

“The Black Swan? Blue Guild? Red Mercenary Guild? Or another guild? It’s definitely a large guild. They’re above a mid-sized guild, right? Do people still do that? It seems that even a large guild doesn’t lack shitty men,” Gook Minji asked.

“I don’t understand what you’re asking…” I[1] said.

“I know everything, so stop playing dumb.”

“What are you asking exactly?”

“Who sponsored you?” she asked.

‘What the hell is she talking about?’

The situation was ridiculous, and obviously, I immediately thought about Cha Hee-Ra, the leader of the Red Mercenary Guild. It was true that Lee Ki-Young grew because Cha Hee-Ra sponsored him, but that wasn’t the case for Lee Ki-Yeon.

‘Did I do something strange?’

Obviously, I was curious why she suddenly brought up the whole issue about sponsors because I hadn’t really done anything that would make her suspicious of that.

I acted very carefully so that they wouldn't find out that I was actually Lee Ki-Young. I never even talked about the large guilds.

I made sure that they wouldn’t find a connection between me, the Blue Guild, Red Mercenary Guild, and the Black Swan Guild.

‘Is it because I handed my bag over? Is she being wary of me because I’m in her

territory? What the hell does she want me to do when I'm exhausted?'

If it had been bearable, I would have carried it all the way, but it really felt like my shoulders were going to break. The body of the high-class Light Ki-Young couldn't handle manual labor like this.

At this point, I couldn't help but think that this was her way of defending her territory. I immediately accepted my assumptions to be true, and I started applauding the corrupted beings of Lindel.

'Why not recruit a friend of yours if you didn't want an outsider? Why are you giving me this crap after accepting me? The dungeon culture here sure is crappy. Are you guys members of a gang or something?'

I had heard about things like this happening. A group would be forced to accept new members due to lack of manpower, but the old members would look down on the new ones.

It didn't make sense, but the original members would either gang up on the new member or otherwise put the new member at a disadvantage. Even worse, they could also come up with a scheme that would favor them more when it came to the reward distribution.

It wasn't against the laws of the Sacred Democratic Country, but such actions were frowned upon by the general public. I couldn't help but feel a headache coming when I thought about the possibility that this woman was that kind of person.

'No, the guys are too cooperative for me to say that they're all like that… '

'Wait, they're too kind for me to say that they're like those people… '

I couldn't help but think that Gook Minji was a bit ignorant about the workings of the world, and even though she didn't say it out loud, she was basically suspecting me of being a mage sponsored by a large guild who had only joined this expedition for fun.

I had a suspicious look when I first saw the temporary contract, and it was also difficult for a mage with three years experience to reach epic unless they were being sponsored.

If a high-rank mage wasn't a member of a large or mid-sized guild, then the answer

could easily be deduced.

'The mage received donations, and she has been supporting herself through that.'

To be honest, I wasn't really happy about the issue, because Lee Ki-Yeon had to join an expedition party for survival. She wasn't really receiving any donations. However, what kind of excuse should I give?

While I was organizing my thoughts, Gook Minji started talking again. "*Ha*. Look at her, pretending like she doesn't know. Why are you pretending like you're innocent? It's written all over your face, Miss Ki-Yeon."

'Let's deny it for now.'

"I really don't know what you're talking about. What do you mean by donation?" I asked.

"Donation? Yeah, you can consider that as a donation. A donation you receive by selling your pride. That's what sponsors are. Don't you agree?" she asked.

'What the hell is she talking about?'

"I really don't understand…"

"I know everything. I've been in Lindel for a long time. It's been four years since I got here, so I know how everything works. How did you obtain an epic-ranked job in three years? How are you able to afford a luxury brand when you said you had nothing? You also lack basic knowledge about expeditions…

"Setting that aside, I can already see what you're trying to do here. There's this popular saying about how a thief would always be a thief. Do you really want to act that way here as well?"

'What's wrong with you? What did I do?'

"I think I know what you're up to, and if you're doing this to start a new life, just stop. Is it fun to laugh at others while flirting and giving compliments to someone else? You should be ashamed of yourself," she added.

"…"

“Stop tempting our innocent oppas. You must’ve heard from someone that the Friendship Clan has a promising future. You deliberately targeted our clan, right? It’s really scary how you approached us with that kind of intention,” Gook Minji warned.

‘What kind of bullshit is this? I’ve never heard of the Friendship Clan—love clan or whatever. Your assumptions are scarier.’

“People like you are the reasons why people are looking down on us, real adventurers. Is it Chul-Woo oppa? Or Tae-Geon oppa? Just give up on your plan to start a new life by getting them involved. Chul-Woo oppa isn’t interested in people like you.”

She frowned.

”I didn’t want to say anything, but it was getting uncomfortable seeing you prance around. You shouldn’t act like this during an expedition. Miss Ki-Yeon, this is a warning.”

“Warning?” I repeated.

“Yes, a warning. We’ll be working together until the end of the expedition, so I’m warning you not to do anything that’ll catch my attention. If you’re determined to start a new life, then show me your skills. Stop being ridiculous by showing off your chest and moaning, do you understand?” she asked.

”You better heed my warning. Otherwise, I have enough connections to contact, and they will help me bury you here, get it?”

‘You’re going to contact everyone you know?’

“Stop focusing on useless things and focus on clearing the dungeon. Remove your make-up as well,” Gook Minji added.

“I didn’t—”

“Are you serious?!” she yelled.

“…”

“…”

Man! Just what could I do with her? I would have been less dejected if what she was saying were true. Unfortunately, it was the opposite. I had never intentionally smiled or flirted with anyone, and I had no idea what she meant by showing off my chest.

I was sure that I had never done anything that would make me come off as that kind of woman. It would have been better if her assumption stopped at me being sponsored by an executive of a large guild.

I was wearing simple clothes, and even though I was holding a Chanelia Hermes bag, my equipment was average at best.

'I'm really prim and proper…! Prim and proper!'

I was the definition of a wise mother and a good wife. The queen of decorum, but despite the effort, the public's reaction was cold. It would be strange for me not to feel surprised.

Before I could say anything to express how victimized I felt, Gook Minji started walking away, leaving one final comment.

"Don't live like a prostitute."

She walked away with confidence, so I was sure that she ripped that line off from a famous drama or something, but…

'Isn't your outfit worse than mine?'

My robe could cover my entire body, at the very least. Since she had a thief-related job, she was wearing tights that stuck tightly to her skin. I could clearly see her cleavage as well.

I also didn't expect that there were still people who thought that defense was directly proportional to the amount of exposure.

Basically, her outfit didn't shy away from showing her figure and curves. I wasn't sure why she was judging me, but Lee Ki-Yeon was obviously the prim and proper one, while Gook Minji was the provocative one.

I looked at the mirror and observed my face. No matter which angle I used to look at myself, I was definitely prim and proper.

'Is she jealous? Or is she really defending her property?'

I had no idea what was going on, but I thought about smashing her head with the mace of justice. Doing that would quickly end all this. Once I was done revealing my true identity as Lee Ki-Young, I could punish her with even more bad news.

Actually, I could completely erase small clans like the Friendship Clan from the continent with just an order from my end. Of course, I could also choose not to end their punishment there.

Well, it would be a bit harsh of a punishment for mere criticism, but I could turn them into demon followers. Unfortunately, I couldn't deactivate this spell on my own. Of course, believing me would be up to them. However, it would be a bit of a pain to handle the aftermath of revealing myself here.

'It's boring… '

And it was honestly kind of annoying as well…

It hadn't been that long since the party had left on this expedition, and I would feel better if I were to turn the tables here. However, the price I would have to pay would be repeating this process all over again, which was annoying.

In addition, screaming that I was an Honorary Cardinal would only make everyone think that I had gone mad.

'I'm sure nothing will happen.'

If I were Light Ki-Young, it would be an insulting remark I couldn't possibly endure. I wanted to backstab that *enlightened* denizen, but the patient, sage-like energy flowing in me wouldn't allow me to do something drastic.

'Let's just stay low until this is over, Ki-Yeon.'

After I was done checking what I had to check, I could just punish her slowly. I wanted something from this party as well, so once I was done with that, everything would be resolved in a natural way.

I tried my best to remain calm as I started walking again.

I saw the party members waiting for me. The four women stood out with their pleased looks, while the men were still staring at me as if they were dumbfounded. I was sure Gook Minji had told the other women about her heroic deed just now.

'She only did one thing, but she's already this excited.'

Yeah, I was sure of it.

'Yeah, enjoy it while you can. Laugh a lot. You guys look cute to me now, bitches.'

I had no idea why they considered Lee Ki-Yeon a prostitute, even though Lee Ki-Yeon was the kind of woman who could be called *extremely* prim and proper if she were in the Joseon Dynasty.

However, I was sure that the women were placated by Gook Minji's actions just now. Still, their expressions changed when Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon approached me.

"Are you okay to leave?" Lee Chul-Woo asked.

"*Oh,* it looks like I made you wait. I'm sorry, Mr. Chul-Woo," I apologized.

"It's fine. We just got up as well," he said.

"Thank you for being so considerate."

"As I've said before, it's only natural that I help out since we're party members," he said.

"You just need to enjoy your time with us, Miss Ki-Yeon. I'm sure the atmosphere is uncomfortable for you because you basically got dragged here without knowing anyone else, so we should take care of you as much as possible," said Kim Tae-Geon. "Isn't that right, Chul-Woo?"

"Yeah, you're right," he replied.

"If you need help, don't hesitate to ask. If it's difficult for you to walk, we can carry you as well. *Haha.* I'm just joking, of course," Lee Chul-Woo chuckled.

"*Hehe*. Your clan feels like it's a nice place to be in," I commented.

"If you're not part of any clan, you can apply—I'm joking about this as well," he said.

"*Geez,* Mr. Tae-Geon…" I said.

Even I thought this was a pretty friendly atmosphere. I noticed the onlookers slowly frowning while I was talking to these two men. I finally understood why Gook Minji suddenly came up to me and threatened me earlier.

'Ah-ha.'

It wouldn't take a genius to deduce based on the look on her face.

'Wow, you really are jealous.'

I was sure she was jealous of how the two men looked like they were ready to lick my feet. I was sure that even if I didn't do anything else, my prim and proper nature would automatically turn me into a queen bee.

'I'm the queen bee!'

Gook Minji was convinced that I had taken them away from her, and Lee Chul-Woo's expression definitely bothered her a lot because she revealed a grim look.

Gook Minji was making the same face Jung Ha-Yan often made back then, and the other women revealed the same expressions. The expressions of satisfaction they had earlier could no longer be seen.

Naturally, I thought about what I should do, but I decided to retreat for now.

I took a step back, and Gook Minji looked relieved.

'I'm not interested in them either. Let's just get along, okay?'

For the sake of the expedition, it was only right for me to maintain a distance between the two men. However, there was definitely something wrong with these two men because they had been approaching me all day.

They kept on trying to talk to me until we arrived at Rift Land.

'What the hell? What's wrong with them? Why are they being so clingy? Why?'

They seemed like they were sexually aroused.

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1. Lee Ki-Yeon POV ☜

CHAPTER 438
WELCOME TO RIFT LAND (1)

'Hah, these guys' unique habits and natures are totally normal compared to the others I have met so far.'

I deliberately picked the most normal players from the start, so this shouldn't have happened because I made sure to pick those who wouldn't get affected by my unique habit. I had a normal personality as well, so there should have been no reason for these people to stick close to me.

Unfortunately, the two were relentless. They just wouldn't get away from me.

'Get away from me, you bastards. Don't come near me, and don't talk to me.'

They kept on talking to me to the point that I was starting to get annoyed with them. In addition, they were doing their best to impress me. I was sure of it. I was a guy, after all.

I was sure that they were willing to give me everything, and they were definitely willing to kiss my feet as well. They weren't really my type, but their actions made it clear that Lee Ki-Yeon was a more charming woman than I initially thought.

Their actions made the four females in the expedition party even angrier at me. I could feel it because their glares had become more intense than before. I really wanted to push these guys away, but I couldn't do that.

They were crossing the line between mere kindness to a party member, but they didn't really do anything else, so I was sure that they didn't have the guts to make a move on me. Still, they were pretty annoying.

'Finally, we arrived… '

It had been a bit difficult for me to endure the desperation of the guys and the women's scornful look, but we managed to arrive at our destination without any major conflict.

'I should massage myself with a potion later. Shit… my legs are hurting.'

It wasn't like I achieved something great, but I felt like I had been challenging my limits with that hike.

Aside from the tutorial dungeon, I couldn't remember walking this much anywhere. I didn't realize it earlier because I was desperate to arrive here, but I finally realized that I had been living a comfortable and privileged life so far.

I could have never imagined that I would be able to hike for this long, so when we arrived at our destination, I was in a pretty good mood.

'They did better than I thought.'

Lee Ji-Hye said that they weren't able to do much because of the lack of time, but the dungeon actually looked high-quality. They paved a road, and a few places looked like they were proper shopping districts.

Of course, some areas were still under construction.

The size of the construction site could be compared to a large city when combined, but I knew that all that space wouldn't be enough if we were to consider the possibility of every human on the continent gathering here.

'It'll be a lot better after about a week… '

That was my first impression of Rift Land…

"We're here."

"There's a lot more people than I thought, *haha*."

"You're right. I'm not sure if we can enter today."

"I'm sure we can. I heard that they can accept a lot of people at once, so let's go ahead and get registered for a queue first. We'll probably be able to enter by tomorrow at the latest."

'I'm kind of late.'

It took me too long to find a party, so it took me a long time to come here. However, I didn't really think that it was all that bad because this meant that the party members could rest properly after that long hike.

I needed to look around as well because I had to know exactly what was going on.

'This is actually good.'

"Let's find a place to stay for the night. We can't just wander around like this," Lee Chul-Woo suggested.

"Okay."

We all nodded in agreement. We started moving again. While we were walking, I saw many adventurers with various jobs. I saw quite a few high-ranked adventurers as well, so I was sure that they had been here for a long time now. There were many people from different ethnicities. I also saw African-Americans and Caucasians, and the sight of them made me think that they definitely came here riding a griffon.

We walked mindlessly for quite a while until the party stopped in front of a large bar that also provided lodging. We entered as if we were possessed, and people greeted us from all directions.

"Welcome to the Rift Inn! Adventurers! Is this! Your first time visiting our inn?"

'The service is great.'

"It is our first time. We just arrived. Do you have any available rooms for us?" Lee Chul-Woo asked.

"Of course we do, Adventurers! We currently have about twenty rooms left on each floor, and we have four types of rooms divided into different ranks—Normal, Rare, Epic, and Legendary…"

"For more details, please peruse the catalog…"

"Normal-ranked rooms are priced at one gold per night, rare-ranked rooms are at five gold per night, epic-ranked rooms are at twenty gold per night, and legendary-ranked rooms are priced at fifty gold per night…

“Prices are per head, and room service isn’t included for the cheaper rooms,” explained the receptionist.

‘Wow… ’

The prices were basically a hundred dollars, five hundred dollars, two thousand dollars, and five thousand dollars per night. Even worse, the sky-high prices didn’t include room service.

‘Ji-Hye, what kind of prices are these? Damn… are you serious? You should’ve decided on a reasonable price.’

I lampooned Lee Ji-Hye in my head, but there was a smile on my face.

Those prices were basically just my pocket money, but for the growing adventurers, I was sure that it was a lot of money.

As expected, the expressions of the Friendship Clan members turned dark. I could tell that they were thinking that they would end up spending money, even though they came here to earn money.

The Clan Master fell into deep contemplation while the Sub Clan Master was perusing the catalog.

“Clan Master, don’t you think it’s expensive?” asked a member.

“We don’t have any other choice…” Lee Chul-Woo replied.

Naturally, I glanced at the catalog as well.

I looked at the legendary-ranked room and nodded.

‘Wow, I think that’s better than my room.’

The room was no different from a room in the Imperial Palace. The services available to those who would avail of a legendary-ranked room were more than great. They would have a dedicated priest on standby around the clock, and the priest could cast fatigue recovery spells.

My potions were offered complimentary, and the quality of food available to the

whales was better than the quality of food one would find in a fancy restaurant.

There were also various facilities for extended-stay customers, including a separate training room for those staying in legendary-ranked rooms.

The services were so great that I wouldn't mind living here for the rest of my life.

'I want to live here… '

The epic-ranked rooms didn't look bad either, and it reminded me of my old room.

It still looked luxurious. The services available to guests of epic-ranked rooms weren't as good as the services available to guests of legendary-ranked rooms, but the services were good enough.

The rare-ranked rooms were a different story because they reminded me of a single room. It had everything a person would need, but I didn't think that I would be able to sleep comfortably in a room like that.

Based on my standards, the normal-ranked rooms were…

'It's no different from a pig pen.'

"We should get the normal-ranked rooms, right?" asked a member.

"Yes. Excuse me… the normal-ranked rooms…" Lee Chul-Woo requested.

"No way. H-How can you sleep in a room like that? *Ugh*," I mumbled unknowingly.

The others immediately looked at me and glared. The female members stared at me with contempt. I knew I had made a mistake, but I didn't really regret my comment.

'Stop looking at me. I said it unknowingly, okay? And to be honest, you guys don't like it, either. Shit… even the bathroom is shared. A bathroom like that is definitely going to be really dirty.'

Honesty wasn't a sin. I wasn't sure if they disliked my comment, but my sudden comment silenced everyone.

The large-framed man broke the ice and said, "I think one day should be fine. I mean,

we have a lot of money with us, am I right, Chul-Woo?"

"We don't really have a lot of money since we had to get new equipment. We have been saving up to buy a clan house as well, so we shouldn't really spend this money on luxuries…" Lee Chul-Woo commented.

"I don't think it's a bad idea to spend a night in comfort," Kim Tae-Geon commented.

"But…"

"We'll be entering the dungeon tomorrow, so I think it's important to get some good rest. Even I think that a normal-ranked room will ruin our condition. You're the one who said that we need to make sure that we're always at peak condition before an expedition…" Kim Tae-Geon explained, "We shouldn't be afraid to use money when it's necessary. I think it's fine, and I'm also worried about the female clan members…"

"I'm fine."

"Me, too."

"I slept on the streets quite often."

'I'm not okay, you bitches. Stop pretending!'

"…"

I didn't do it on purpose, but it seemed that I looked sad because Kim Tae-Geon asked me a question.

"Are you not feeling well, Miss Ki-Yeon?"

"No, it's not that. My legs are just… Don't worry about me. I'll be fine after a good rest," I replied.

"Look, Chul-Woo. Would you be able to sleep fine on a bed like that? We need to get at least a rare-ranked room for us to rest properly…" Kim Tae-Geon suggested.

'Good job, dude.'

"I mean, we'll be rewarded once we have conquered a dungeon, you know? Let's just

pretend that we're taking a loan out of our money. Anyway, I think we should get a move on. Standing around like this is a bit embarrassing. What do you think?" asked Kim Tae-Geon.

"There's a chance that we might fail…" Lee Chul-Woo muttered.

"I'll do my best. Please, Chul-Woo," he begged.

"Well, when you say it like that—All right, let's do it," Lee Chul-Woo finally surrendered.

'That's what I'm talking about!'

They finally decided to book rare-ranked rooms. I wasn't fully satisfied, but I was happy.

"We'll take rare-ranked rooms."

"Great choice, Adventurers! We currently have a promotion for people staying in rare-ranked rooms. To help you with your dungeon conquest, we're giving you a rare-ranked health potion manufactured by the Blue Guild," the receptionist explained.

"I-I see. Thank you," said Lee Chul-Woo.

'It's a shitty potion. There's no way I'll drink that even if it's free.'

However, the members of the Friendship Clan were delighted by the freebie.

The receptionist seemed like they were showing off their generosity by giving a trashy low-quality potion while charging five hundred dollars for an overnight stay. It was a typical tactic of business people to make people feel better about their expenditures.

The receptionist probably didn't know that I was having these thoughts because they were getting ready to extort these adventurers with a friendly face. This was going to be important since the only thing they cared about was growth.

"You guys are adventurers who are going to attempt the museum, right?"

“That’s right,” Lee Chul-Woo answered.

“Have you gone through the procedure?” asked the receptionist.

“We just arrived, so we haven’t registered yet. If we need to submit an application, we’ll make sure we submit it before going to our rooms,” he said.

“No, adventurers! You do not have to do that because the Rift Inn can help you with that. Can you tell me the rank of the dungeon you’re going to attempt to clear?” they asked.

‘They’re adventurer-friendly. I like it.’

“Epic,” Lee Chul-Woo answered.

“It’ll be a total of five hundred gold for epic-ranked dungeons. However, we have an ongoing promotion, so you will only have to pay three hundred gold!” they explained.

“Okay.”

“Six people, right? You’ll be able to leave tomorrow afternoon. You can follow our guide right after you check out tomorrow, and if you need expedition insurance…”

“What's expedition insurance?” he asked.

“It’s insurance in case the expedition fails. You only have one life, after all. The powerful adventurers affiliated with Rift Land are on standby around the clock in case of special situations…”

”A high-ranked priest is also included in the insurance, so your chance of survival will increase. Sometimes, our experts will also help out with the expedition. The price is the same as the rooms, and they’re separated into Normal, Rare, Epic, and Legendary tiers as well,” replied the receptionist.

“…”

“It’s for those who think that they need just a bit of help…” they paused.

“…”

“We also provide loans,” they added.

‘Wow… Lee Ji-Hye, you’re a real piece of shit! This is such a scummy deal! But…! I love you, Ji-Hye!’

I couldn’t help but click my tongue.

“We provide loans,” repeated the receptionist.

The receptionist sounded adorable earlier, but they suddenly started to sound like a demon.

CHAPTER 439
WELCOME TO RIFT LAND (2)

Loan? A loan? The female receptionist's sparking eyes reminded me of Lee Ji-Hye.

'How can you do this? You're not being reasonable at all.'

I had come up with many ideas, but I had never thought about offering loans. It seemed that it was a secret weapon that would exponentially grow Rift Land's profit. Still, I couldn't really complain because loans were an efficient way to earn money.

'You're really cruel. I guess Lee Ji-Hye didn't become a masked scum in vain.'

There had been a few times when I thought of myself as scum, and there had also been a few times when I became filled with shame and started reflecting on my actions.

However, what Lee Ji-Hye had done banished the feelings of shame in the deepest recesses of my heart. I was scum, but I was basically a firefly when compared to Lee Ji-Hye, who had to be a nuclear power plant.

I was like a children's pool in front of a rushing tsunami.

I couldn't help but clap at her extreme cruelty, and she was definitely planning on making all the adventurers in Rift Land go into debt. I could already see the overall picture.

The adventurers were here with their big dreams, and they would inevitably spend money while thinking that they would make it back. However, the unexpected expenses would continue to accumulate.

In a nutshell, they would spend a lot of money here.

If they were successful in their dungeon conquest, they would probably be able to recoup their expenses, but a single mistake would basically drag their bank account balances deep into the negative.

There was no way that those people would be able to stomach leaving Rift Land. After all, there was nothing more tragic than failing after spending so much money.

They would either try again while holding tightly onto their big dreams or enter the dungeon again later after analyzing their mistakes and doing as much research as they could to minimize mistakes.

And that when they would inevitably spend money on lodging, supplies, equipment, dungeon entry cost, insurance, and food. In other words, staying here was costly.

They could produce excellent results after retrying, but they would find it difficult to make up for the previous losses.

'Ha… '

The scummy Lee Ji-Hye had set up a trap similar to quicksand. It would suck people in, and they would still be in debt even after they decided to leave Rift Land. I was sure that they would only be able to pay the interest even if they worked their entire lives.

I was also sure that they would definitely be forced to wander the wilds of the continent just to barely survive.

It was a bit heartbreaking, but this was the right thing to do. They would lose everything, yes—but they would emerge even stronger after the harrowing experience. In addition, they would also become hardworking adventurers.

After all, they wouldn't be able to afford to be lazy.

Shots would always be painful, and Lee Ji-Hye's setup was like a shot that contained medicine that would soon spur the lazy people of the continent into action. I was sure that Benigoa and Elune scum would be crying tears of joy in a few years.

'Nice… '

I was having all sorts of thoughts, but the female receptionist kept on looking at our party like an eagle watching its prey.

'Yeah, it's understandable.'

The female receptionist had achieved a lot through words alone. She managed to make us pay for insurance, and she was now tempting us to take a loan. Of course, I got a bit anxious at that. After all, it was hard to resist the temptation of spending money.

"So you offer loans as well…" Lee Chul-Woo commented.

"It's for the convenience of the adventurers in Rift Land. The customer's convenience is the motto of Rift Land," she said.

'Look at her lying through her teeth…!'

"I'm sure there are many things you're worried about. We're providing various services so that you can focus on the expedition, and that's the reason why expedition insurance and loans exist," she continued.

"I don't know about the loan, but… how does the expedition insurance work?" he asked.

"It's like I explained earlier. Ordinary adventurers often avoid getting insurance, but I believe that it's worth getting insurance, considering the low survival rate in rare-ranked dungeons. After all, you would be compensated in case of accidents…"

"Of course, experienced adventurers are unlikely to commit mistakes that would lead to accidents because they have studied the manual for a long time. However, our insurance is currently popular with newly-formed parties…"

"Those people will be working together for the first time, so accidents are likely to happen. The Blue Guild, the Black Swan Guild, and the Red Mercenary Guild have also emphasized the importance of expedition insurance," explained the receptionist.

"*Hm*… newly-formed parties," repeated Lee Chul-Woo.

"Yes, accidents are likely within newly-formed parties. Our insurance doesn't only cover accidents that could happen during dungeon conquests, but we also have mediators who would mediate conflict between party members. They also handle reward distribution conflicts," she added.

'Don't fall for it, guys.'

Unfortunately, they were already falling for it.

“I think… this is worth thinking about. Don’t you think so, oppa? It would be fine if it were just us, but we have an outsider. We don’t even know if we’ll have good teamwork…” Gook Minji commented.

‘Don’t look at me, you bitches.’

The receptionist even spoke up, and I felt like I was watching a home shopping host.

“*Ah!* The mage must be the new member. I’m sure that makes you nervous, but I’m not looking down on the beautiful mage…”

”However, it’s less likely that a newly-formed party will be able to move as one. I believe it’s a great choice because it can protect you from accidents that can cost dozens of gold per head. Obviously, the choice is yours,” she explained.

“*Ugh*, this is…” Kim Tae-Geon agonized.

“No, Tae-Geon. I think it’s a good idea to get it. As she said, we don’t know what kind of accidents might happen. We’ll get the normal-ranked insurance,” Lee Chul-Woo requested.

“Great choice, sir! Please read the contract carefully and sign it—*Ah!* And…” she paused.

“Yes?”

“Did you know that, unlike other dungeons, the boss monsters in the Rift Museum are decided randomly?” she asked.

“What do you mean…” he asked.

“The three types of boss monsters and reward items are all random, sir. Some people are fortunate enough to be able to clear the dungeon without many issues, but others have encountered unexpectedly strong boss monsters, and they really struggled…”

”We have received reports from unfortunate parties about how they had encountered monsters that can emit poisonous fogs and even monsters that can cast

curses…"

"Did you bring items to cleanse poisons or curses?" asked the receptionist.

"W-We didn't…" Lee Chul-Woo stammered.

"Don't worry too much, Adventurers! Rift Land sells packages that can deal with those special monsters. The package includes eleven types of potions created by the Alchemist of Light, Mr. Lee Ki-Young himself…"

"There are also consumable items that are going to be useful in those situations. Of course, the prices are very reasonable," explained the receptionist.

'Don't go overboard, guys. You demons.'

"Of course, we have packages lower in quality than that, but I personally recommend the eleven types of potions that Mr. Lee Ki-Young had made. Unlike the low-quality potions, his potions do not have expiration dates…"

"Their quality also doesn't go down even after a long time. We also have potions that would maintain one's body temperature, and you do not have to worry about storing them in a cool or warm place. They're also markedly more effective than other potions of the same type. They're very useful against fire or ice-type monsters, and they're priced significantly lower than the market price," added the receptionist.

"That sounds great," Kim Tae-Geon commented.

"I think we're spending too much money…" Lee Chul-Woo muttered.

"Think about it, Chul-Woo. They'll be useful to us no matter what. Even if we don't end up using them during this expedition, we can still use them later. I think it'll be good to buy at least a package," Kim Tae-Geon suggested.

"The packages can be purchased at the Blue Guild as well, so you don't have to purchase them here. You can think about it more and decide later," said the receptionist.

"Don't you think we need it? You're not that confident in detoxification spells, right? If we encounter an epic-ranked poison-type monster…" Kim Tae-Geon trailed off.

“You do have a point…” Lee Chul-Woo nodded.

“You don’t have to make a decision right now,” said the receptionist with a bright smile.

‘Who is she?’

I naturally got curious about her.

‘What’s a talented person like her doing here?’

Talented people like her had to be treated well because she was providing value and service with her voice that tempted people to buy things. She was like the host of a home shopping channel.

Honestly, she even got me tempted to buy my own items.

“If you purchase one right now, I’ll give you three types of high-quality stamina potions as gifts,” said the receptionist.

“We’ll get it,” Kim Tae-Geon said.

“You’ve made a wise choice, sir,” she commented.

It hadn’t even been that long since we arrived at Rift Land, but the party already spent an unimaginable amount of money in just a few hours upon arriving.

‘Wow, they’re really ripping them off.’

I looked around and saw other parties talking with the other inn staff members.

It was ridiculous how every party had bought packages that would be useful against special monsters. Even rare-ranked parties had bought one and were treating them as if they were precious treasures.

‘I don’t think rare-ranked parties can buy those packages.’

I was sure that they had taken out a loan. My potions were also tailored to deal with epic-ranked monsters or higher, so those people would basically be using a sledgehammer to crack open a walnut.

Aside from them, there were other people looking through the equipment catalog containing equipment that Yoo Ah-Young had made.

'They definitely took out a loan.'

There were also some people who were spending money on useless things.

'I really like this… '

I really wanted to applaud how convenient everything was here. Every store was connected to the Rift Inn, so people didn't really have to visit various shops to procure items. Everything could be done in the Rift Inn. They could apply to enter the museum, buy expedition insurance, take out a loan, and even purchase weapons.

I didn't look at the other half of the catalog, but I was sure that this thick book contained a list of all the services available in Rift Land. Even more amazing was the fact that only one control tower was maintaining the entire shopping complex.

'Convenience.'

Of course, there was a small price to pay in the form of high and fixed prices, but this was a small price considering how all this would be able to protect the entire continent.

'Do you see this, Miss Metel? Many people are loving your museum.'

I was sure that Max's mother, who was already in heaven, was smiling brightly at the sight.

I found the exorbitant, fixed prices and blatant sales tactics a bit too much. After all, those two could definitely make people a bit uncomfortable.

However, my displeasure didn't last that long. I started nodding unknowingly, especially at the scene that happened in the restaurant where our party decided to eat.

"*Yeah,* I came in this morning and got this! It's a Legendary item! The Queen of Truth's Necklace! The Rift Museum is totally worth it!"

I thought that Barkdeku, the fighter of democracy, had already died. However, he was

actually still alive. He was in the same restaurant as me and with a brand-new identity as a Russian foreigner named Bark Sergei.

“You guys should hurry up and go in! You won’t get items like this anywhere else!” he exclaimed.

‘Why are you here?’

In addition, Ahn Ki-Mo and Kim Ye-Ri were next to him.

‘Stop going around and putting on an act without letting me know beforehand!’

“Rift Museum! It’s a really high-quality dungeon!” yelled Bark Sergei.

The way he yelled even convinced me that the Rift Museum was the real deal.

CHAPTER 440
WELCOME TO RIFT LAND (3)

“Miss Ki-Yeon, you don’t look so good…” Lee Chul-Woo pointed out.

“No, I’m fine,” I answered.

An adventurer would usually spend time with their party members to promote camaraderie. Small parties would usually just conduct a gathering in a restaurant for the members to eat together.

However, large parties would usually hold pep rallies because camaraderie and unity between party members were extremely important in high-ranked dungeons.

Of course, there were people who didn’t really want to make connections with other people, but the Koreans in Lindel really liked those events.

As for me, I really wanted to just rest. However, the members of the Friendship Clan seemed like they collectively thought that they needed to do something like this.

Left with no other choice, I headed down to the restaurant, which was also like a pub, located just beneath the Rift Inn.

I ate a hearty dinner and drank rum. The food wasn’t that great, but it had been quite a while since I was a commoner, so I actually enjoyed the quaint and calming atmosphere.

However, it all ended when I saw Bark Sergei and Argimo.

“I’m telling you, I just came here this morning and got this! It’s a Legendary item! The Queen of Truth’s Necklace! The Rift Museum is seriously great! You guys should hurry up and go there! You’ll regret not going there! It’s blessed by the Goddess of Benigoa!” Bark Sergei yelled.

‘That pig… ’

“Thanks, Rift Museum! It’s actually filled with high-quality catalysts as well! I’ll be able to sleep in a legendary-ranked room tonight!” Argimo exclaimed as well.

Argimo looked Caucasian, but Mind’s Eye told me that they were Park Deok-Gu and Ahn Ki-Mo. It was also an absurd sight to see Kim Ye-Ri acting as the Russian Yetni Koba. She was helping them as well by tempting the others to believe their stories.

The restaurant-cum-pub started to feel like an underground pub in Moscow.

‘I thought she hated acting?’

I couldn’t help but think that Kim Ye-Ri’s body was more honest than her mouth because she was definitely enjoying the attention that she was receiving. She reminded me of an actress who had been nominated to receive the Best Actress Reward.

If she hadn’t been born here, I was sure that she would have become an actress on Earth. I was sure that they had no idea that I was watching them.

Bark Sergei kept on swinging the necklace around and even shouted, “Everyone’s drinks will be on me tonight!”

‘Stop it, you pig! Don’t be like this… ’

I was sure that he was going to use his own money to pay for everyone’s drinks.

‘What are you going to do if you get caught…?’

Of course, he wouldn’t really get caught, so I didn’t really have to worry about that.

In addition, the people here lacked the ability to use detection-type magic.

The overall quality of the restaurant-cum-pub wasn’t bad, but I reckoned that only commoners would come here.

I was also sure that even legendary-ranked people would find it hard to detect Bark Sergei, Argimo, and Yetni Koba’s disguises. Of course, those people wouldn’t really have any reason to come to a place like this in the first place.

‘I’m sure they’re all in their private rooms or drinking at a premium pub or whatever.’

If I were Lee Ki-Young, then there was also no way that I would come to a place like this unless it would be for a visit to encourage the workers here.

The large-framed man sitting in front of me noticed me staring at Bark Sergei's party.

"Do you know them?" Kim Tae-Geon asked.

"No, I just think that they're being loud… I've never seen them before," I replied.

"People like them are everywhere, so it will be for the best for you to ignore them. I've heard about up-and-coming holy people from the Republic, and they're one of them…"

"That large-framed man there is Bark Sergei. In contrast to his large physique, he's actually a mage, and he's using an unprecedented type of magic called physical magic," explained Kim Tae-Geon.

'How did you hear rumors I have never even heard? It seems that their connections are wider than I thought, and you're an idiot. Physical magic doesn't exist.'

"The man beside him is Argimo, and he's a warrior with the moniker Berserker. They say that once he tastes blood, he'll become relentless until he passes out. His weapon had apparently tasted the blood of thousands of people…" added Kim Tae-Geon.

'He's a priest. Yes, he's a combat priest, but I'm sure that he has never tasted blood.'

"And that woman is Yetni Koba, and she is their clan master. The interesting part is that she is a dancer. Her deadly dance charms everyone, regardless of gender," said Kim Tae-Geon.

'Deadly dance, my ass! Ye-Ri, don't include your dreams in your acting. You're pretty cheeky for a kid… I'm sure Hyun-Sung is crying in the guild office. Don't set up things like that. Please don't… '

The details were really important when it came to effective acting, so I had many things I was dissatisfied with when it came to their acting. I couldn't help but think that they had to have gone in this direction because their soul—Light Ki-Young—wasn't there.

However, I also wanted to applaud them.

'I guess those are fine… '

Telling everyone the item that they had obtained was great, but if their goal was to promote the Rift Museum, then I had a different opinion about it. Lee Ji-Hye had told me that Park Deok-Gu had fully recovered, but from the looks of it, he seemed like he had never been healthier. He looked as if he had never gotten hurt in the first place.

'You pig…!'

I couldn't help but nod because he was acting like his usual self. I was worried that they were going to notice me, but they didn't seem to be interested in me at all. They were focused on something totally different.

'I don't think I need to worry about them.'

It was more important for me to focus on the conversations of my tablemates than pay attention to Bark Sergei and the others.

"Yetni Koba and Bark Sergei… they've leveled up. I couldn't really see it, but I'm jealous that they got a legendary-ranked item. Of course, I'm also happy because that means that we can get one as well…" Kim Tae-Geon remarked. "The rates must not be as bad as I thought."

"Who knows? We'll find out once we enter, but… this means that there's a lot of content in the Rift Museum, oppa. It's not just him. I saw other people showing off the items that they had obtained…" Gook Minji chimed in. "I was honestly kind of worried because we had invested so much gold, but I wouldn't ask for anything else as long as we get an item like that…"

"We have to get an item like that no matter what. As you said, we had spent a lot of gold, and we need to obtain at least an epic-ranked item to make up for our expenses. It is also said that we have a total of three tries every attempt, so I'm sure it's possible…"

"Even if we fail, we can think of it as accumulating experience," said Lee Chul-Woo.

"I think it was a good idea to buy the potions. I actually wanted to use the potions that the Alchemist of Light had manufactured… Of course, it'll be great if we end up not having to use it on our first attempt," she said.

“You’re right. Those potions are beneficial to us even in the long run. It’s not like we’re going to retire after this one expedition, and since we will have to carry it with us just in case from now on, then it’s definitely a great purchase…”

”By the way, is the food… to your liking, Miss Ki-Yeon?” Kim Tae-Geon asked.

“…”

I honestly didn’t really like it, and my awkward smile had to have answered his question. The guys were surprised and flustered as their knees turned weak at the sight of my awkward smile, while the female members looked at me with contempt once again.

‘Ah, I made a mistake again.’

Even I thought that I was behaving in a distasteful way.

“No, no, it’s delicious. It’s just that I don’t feel good. Anyway, our meeting is a good reason for us to celebrate, so how about we toast?” I suggested.

“Good idea,” Lee Chul-Woo agreed.

“For the Rift Museum expedition!” Kim Tae-Geon shouted.

“Cheers!”

“For a successful expedition!” Kim Tae-Geon added.

When our glasses clinked, I glanced at Gook Minji, and she still looked angry. I was sure that I had really gotten on her nerves. I couldn’t help but realize once again that being too cautious could encourage hostility.

‘It’s your loss.’

There wasn’t really anything that I could do if they kept on putting up their walls in front of me, so I decided to just drink the alcohol in my cup.

“*Ha*…”

The refreshing and satisfying feeling made me sigh in joy.

'Everything else tastes bad, but this one isn't so bad.'

A large sausage. I had no idea who made the sausage, but it was great. The sauce on the outside was really delicious as well. I wanted to take a big bite of the large sausage, but it wouldn't fit in my tiny mouth.

"*Ahem, ahem.*"

I licked the dripping sauce and took small bites. When it became small enough for my tiny mouth to handle, I took a big bite.

"This is really delicious. *Mmhm!*" I remarked.

The two men blushed, and the four women stared at me in disgust. All of a sudden, I noticed people approaching me, and they were four men with large physiques.

'Who are these guys?'

I had a feeling that I would experience the same experience as those protagonists of Chinese novels whenever they ate in a restaurant. However, I actually didn't expect that the same scene in those martial arts novels would happen to me.

"Lady, what's your name? How about you drink with us?"

"Don't play with these weaklings. Come and play with us."

"Hey, what's your name, little lady? I've never seen you before. Are you from Lindel?"

How was it possible that men like them seemed like they wouldn't change at all? They completely ignored the two men in our party, and from their demeanor alone, it was clear that they weren't good guys.

Their approach made Tae-whatever frown.

"What?"

'Don't act rashly, Tae-Geon. They look stronger than you… '

I couldn't determine the outcome of the fight solely from their status windows, but the drunk bastards looked stronger than our party.

If they fought, I was sure that they would easily take the upper hand. Of course, there was really no reason to fight because I didn't really like to create a useless commotion.

In addition to complicating things, it might also cause issues for the expedition.

Lee Chul-Woo, who was sitting next to me. definitely thought the same because he was trying to intervene and de-escalate the situation. Unfortunately, his efforts seemed like they were useless.

"How about we go outside and talk?" Lee Chul-Woo suggested.

"Chul-Woo, they won't listen to you. And scums like these guys are everywhere in a society like this, " Kim Tae-Geon remarked.

"Why are you calling us scums? Is it a crime to ask her to play with us?"

"It is a crime if it's making our party members uncomfortable. Isn't it your fault for talking to her without a reason? It'll be great if you back off," Kim Tae-Geon said.

"The lady looked so pitiful, so we had to intervene. I think you're being too sensitive about this."

"What?"

"She'll obviously suffer if she stays with you, so we couldn't help but talk to her and ask her to come with us. Isn't that why we came here? Am I right?" said one of the drunk bastards to his fellow drunk bastards.

"You bastards. What did you say?" Kim Tae-Geon couldn't take it anymore.

"Tae-Geon! Stop!" Lee Chul-Woo exclaimed.

"You want to fight? Let's go."

"Follow me outside, you bastard!" Kim Tae-Geon yelled.

The situation was nothing more than kid's play, but the atmosphere had gotten pretty serious. The rare-ranked parties quietly left because they were afraid of getting involved, and the commotion caused the remaining people to look our way.

'Ha… this is really annoying.'

Obviously, I was annoyed because I had just gotten involved in an issue that I wouldn't have gotten involved in if I were Light Ki-Young. I couldn't help but think that I had to resolve this situation somehow before the commotion attracted Rift Land's guards.

'I should calm them down first before sending them away. Of course, I'll still submit a civil complaint later.'

I was about to speak up, but a voice interrupted me.

"Physical magic."

"*Huh?*"

"Backdrop."

The drunk bastard, who looked like the leader of the other three, crashed to the floor.

'Park Deok-Gu, you bastard!'

I didn't manage to speak because a hero suddenly arrived.

"Come on, guys, let's just drink quietly," said Park Deok-Gu.

CHAPTER 441
WELCOME TO RIFT LAND (4)

Physical Magic, Backdrop…

'Physical magic, my ass! You just grabbed him and threw him to the floor…!'

It was a ridiculous but powerful move. The bastard that got hit by the *physical magic* was on the verge of crossing the rainbow bridge. Not only was he wearing a robe, but Park Deok-Gu had a staff on his waist, and he truly looked like a physical mage.

'Now that I have seen it myself, I guess it's pretty strong.'

I knew he had gotten a lot stronger, but this was the first time I had seen him in action after becoming even stronger than in his past life.

The cliched cannon fodders who suddenly appeared didn't seem noteworthy, but they were still epic-ranked players. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that they were stronger than Park Deok-Gu in his past life.

My jaw dropped unknowingly because he managed to throw one guy on the ground with a single spell, and I finally realized how influential and powerful the Blue Guild had become.

The Blue Guild was filled with monsters.

Park Deok-Gu was nothing more than a meat shield, but he was really useful in parties.

Unfortunately, Park Deok-Gu wasn't really that strong when it came to face-to-face combat. He was weak to the point that he became famous as the combat dummy of the Blue Guild.

Jo Hye-Jin became a monster after obtaining a unicorn, and Kim Ye-Ri had always been someone whose limits I couldn't really grasp.

Of course, Park Deok-Gu couldn't compare to those two, but his ridiculous Endurance stats made him the perfect slaughterer of innocent people.

In other words, Park Deok-Gu—no, Bark Sergei, was strong against the weak.

"These guys are everywhere," Park Deok-Gu commented.

A female member of the Friendship Clan stared agape at Park Deok-Gu. The others who had just witnessed the power of his physical magic were dumbfounded. At this point, I thought that the drunk bastards would run away.

However, it seemed that I had overestimated them because it was clear that they wouldn't just stand idly by while thinking that their stats were higher than Bark Sergei's.

"Who the hell are you?!"

"Physical Magic. Iron Skin," Park Deok-Gu casted.

"*Ahhhhhhhhh!* My hand!"

"Physical Magic. Arm as Strong as Iron," he cast once again.

"You pig!"

He started attacking, and the power of this physical magic stupefied the drunk thugs. In the end, one of the thugs placed his hand on the sword that was on his waist.

He was planning on using his sword to attack, but of course, Bark Sergei's party members weren't just going to watch.

In the end, the sword didn't manage to leave its sheath. Why? It was all because Berserker Argimo, who would apparently go crazy at the taste of blood, was holding the thug's hand.

"This is a warning. If you unsheathe it… you'll die," Arkimo threatened.

'Don't try to act all serious… '

He looked like an idiot, but he *did* look cool.

“You crazy bastards! Do you have any idea who we are?!”

I heard another loud voice, and that was when Yetni Koba’s figure vanished.

“Dance of Enchantment.”

I wasn’t sure why it had such a name, but the way she spun several times in the air made her look fancy.

“Everyone! I suggest you look away if you don’t want to get charmed.”

She ended it with a simple kick. I was worried that the thug’s head would turn a hundred and eighty degrees, but he was definitely still alive, judging from the way his chest was moving up and down.

The adventures who knew about the effect of her Dance of Enchantment turned their heads away, but I saw her ordinary kick land on the thug’s head. Of course, I didn’t turn away because I knew that the so-called enchantment was bullshit.

She tried to maintain the sexiest pose possible, but the Kim Ye-Ri I was seeing through Mind’s Eye made me laugh.

‘Ye-Ri… Please don’t do this… It’s so funny I’m tearing up.’

It seemed like she was fantasizing about becoming a femme fatale.

The situation was resolved, and they cleaned up the trash before the guards arrived, blanketing the entire restaurant-cum-pub in silence. Everyone wore dumbfounded looks.

Everyone here knew that the thugs were a bit strong, and they also knew about Bark Sergei and the others’ identities as holy figures of the Republic.

Still, I could understand their shock. After all, they had just witnessed the power of the up-and-coming holy figures of the Republic.

A few strong figures watching from the corner were wary of Bark Sergei. It was highly likely that I would meet them today or tomorrow.

‘It’s fun to see how things are working here.’

It was impressive how the small-sized clans either formed an alliance or outright disbanded. Some even waged a war of nerves. I also saw a few recruiters whispering to each other while some used magic to prevent eavesdroppers.

However, I was sure that they were talking about the up-and-coming holy figures of the Republic.

I wasn't sure how Yetni Koba was going to lead her clan, but that was none of my business because it was more important for me to resolve this situation right now.

Bark Sergei started talking, "Hey, sorry about causing all that commotion."

"It's fine. Thank you… for the help," Lee Chul-Woo replied.

"I wouldn't even consider it as help. I was worried that I interfered when it was none of my business…" said Bark Sergei.

"That's not true. I wanted to avoid conflict like this as much as possible," replied Lee Chul-Woo.

"*Ah!* You're preparing for an expedition," Bark Sergei pointed out.

"Yes, that's right," he said.

"Yeah, you never know what could happen if you get involved in situations like this before an expedition. It'll be a serious problem if you get hurt before an expedition because it could delay it. I'm glad I helped…"

"Anyway, where are you guys from?" asked Bark Sergei.

'Why is this pig trying to have a conversation with them?'

I wanted him to stop talking and go back to his seat, but he continued talking. I already knew that he enjoyed talking, but I could have never imagined that he would talk energetically to a party he had just met for the first time.

The Friendship Clan's first impression of him seemed great.

"From Lindel. You guys are probably from the Republic… Actually, how about you join us? I'd like to buy you a meal," Lee Chul-Woo offered.

'This bastard is pretty smart.'

The Clan Master of the Friendship Clan was pretty smart. Actually, it was more like he didn't want opportunities like this to go to waste. It was true that the Friendship Clan was an epic-ranked clan, but the members were no different from rookies.

I was sure that they saw Yetni Koba's clan as a clan that would soon become a legendary-ranked clan. Therefore, Lee Chul-Woo had to have judged that nothing bad would come out of befriending them.

'I'm sure they want to hear about the Rift Museum while they're at it… '

Obviously, I wasn't happy about this situation because I was worried that they would get suspicious of me. However, Yetni Koba and the others weren't interested in me.

"*Ah*, there's no need," said Bark Sergei.

"Since you offered to pay for everyone's drink here, I'll at least buy the food," Lee Chul-Woo offered.

"*Ah*, well, if you say it like that, I guess I have no choice," he said.

"Thank you."

"I'm Bark Sergei. This is Argimo, and she's our clan master, Yetni Koba," said Bark Sergei.

"Nice to meet you," Argimo greeted.

"…"

The two of them stayed in character. Ahn Ki-Mo nodded, while Kim Ye-Ri simply nodded without saying anything.

It wasn't really surprising, but Lee Chul-Woo nodded and spoke, "I'm Lee Chul-Woo, the Clan Master of the Friendship Clan in Lindel."

"*Hm*…"

"This is Kim Tae-Geon, the Sub Clan Master of our clan. This is Gook Minji, our

assassin, and this is…" Lee Chul-Woo introduced his clan members one by one, and when it was my turn, he looked like he had no idea how to introduce me to them.

I felt that stepping up and introducing myself was the right thing to do.

"I'm Lee Ki-Yeon, and I joined the Friendship Clan party for this expedition," I said.

"…"

"…"

Everyone's eyes immediately landed on me. It was absurd how Park Deok-Gu stared at me intently, and even Ahn Ki-Mo was studying my face.

It wouldn't really matter if I got caught, and just as I started hoping that they would pretend as if they didn't know me, Park Deok-Gu started speaking, "Have we met somewhere before?"

"What?" I asked.

"I feel like I've seen you from somewhere—*Ugh*. I definitely saw you before…" Park Deok-Gu repeated.

"You're… mistaking me for someone else. I have never gone outside of Lindel," I told him.

"*Sniff, sniff!*"

'What's wrong with him?'

"Your smell is familiar… Are you sure we have never met before?" he asked.

'Are you a dog?'

Park Deok-Gu's actions made the atmosphere awkward, and the members of the Friendship Clan suddenly became wary of Bark Sergei. Fortunately, Park Deok-Gu seemed to have realized his mistake as he went silent and started eating a sausage.

Of course, he kept on glancing at me. Even while the Friendship Clan was trying to extract information about the Rift Museum from them, Park Deok-Gu still kept on

glancing at me.

'This pig is surprisingly quick-witted.'

Thankfully, Gangwon Province's Love Doctor didn't do anything that would cause me trouble, but I didn't feel good about all this.

"So… what's the Rift Museum like?" Lee Chul-Woo asked.

"I'm sure it'll be fine for you. We got one rare-ranked sword and one epic-ranked armor, but we think that we got our money's worth. But a legendary-ranked necklace… I honestly could have never imagined getting this," Park Deok-Gu replied.

"If you don't mind, could you tell us about the difficulty?" he asked.

"*Ah*, you must've registered for an epic-ranked dungeon, right?" he asked.

"Yes, that's right. It's our first time, and we believe that this is the best place to gain experience," he answered.

"It wasn't that difficult. Honestly, it felt kind of easy to us. We wanted to enter a legendary-ranked dungeon, but we're not that strong yet. I'm sure we'll be good enough next time. I mean, we can use the item we obtained today to become even stronger," Park Deok-Gu replied.

The way he talked about getting stronger while shaking the necklace made me realize that he was also talented when it came to luring people in.

I was sure that he had received a mission from Lee Ji-Hye, and the mission involved showing off a legendary-ranked item to others.

Naturally, the members of the Friendship Clan got jealous.

However, the story about how he had obtained a legendary-ranked necklace in an epic-ranked dungeon…

'It doesn't make sense. The story doesn't make sense.'

The clan members had heard about it through different advertisements, but they finally managed to confirm it with their own eyes.

I had just obtained a Semi-Mythic item, so I wasn't really that interested in Legendary items anymore, but Legendary items couldn't be underestimated at all. Even the Blue Guild didn't have that many Legendary items.

In fact, even Ahn Ki-Mo and Sun Hee-Young didn't have a single Legendary item.

Supreme treasures were priceless, and those items were cheat items that could turn one into a powerful individual. It seemed that the people on Earth weren't the only ones crazy about hitting the jackpot in a lottery.

"I'm sure there are thousands of items in the Rift Museum. I don't know why it has those items, but I'm sure that the quantity is limited," added Park Deok-Gu.

"*Ah*…"

"Do you understand what I mean by limited quantity? The legendary-ranked items stored in the Rift Museum can only be obtained on a first come, first served basis…"

"Of course, the rates are low, but it's a worthy gamble. It's even more worth it for those ordinary adventures who feel like they couldn't progress beyond epic-ranked dungeons. Items like these are helpful for breakthroughs," said Park Deok-Gu.

"I see…"

"This is the chance for ordinary people like us to stand on our feet. Just that alone makes the Rift Museum worthy of our time and attention," he said.

'That's convincing. This guy is a good talker.'

"And they say that all the gold spent here will be used for military funds," he informed them.

"What?"

"Everything we're spending our money on… they're going to be the funds that would be used to fight for the continent's peace," Park Deok-Gu answered.

"*Ah*…"

"I'm sure you've heard of the threat," Park Deok-Gu added.

“We’ve heard it before, but—”

“It’s true. It’s not just a rumor. It’s true that there are beings threatening the continent,” Park Deok-Gu interrupted, sounding like he didn’t have even an ounce of deceit in his words.

In addition, he looked like he was carrying a heavy burden on his shoulders.

‘Is this your third life?’

I couldn’t help but think that way…

‘How many lives has this pig gone through?’

CHAPTER 442
A PRIM AND PROPER IMAGE

“That’s…”

“Yeah, our hyung-nim at the Blue Guild, I mean, the Sub Guild Master of the Blue Guild and the Democratic Country’s Honorary Cardinal, Lee Ki-Young, said it himself. The threat does exist,” Park Deok-Gu said.

“We are ignorant, so we have no idea what that means. The war has already ended, and it’s finally peaceful, but I think the peace we are enjoying right now is just an absurd facade…” Park Deok-Gu added. ”The Sacred Democratic Country, the Republic, the Union of Kingdoms, and even the Kingdom of Others are standing united for the same goal.” “I see…”

“They intentionally didn’t suppress the news about how the continent will become chaotic soon. Many large guilds, unions, and clans are preparing for the threat, and there have also been quite a few secret meetings,” said Park Deok-Gu. “I’m sure that we will find more information soon.”

“Is the threat the reason why demon dungeons started appearing after the death of Demon Summoner Jin Cheong?” Lee Chul-Woo asked.

“I think it’s safe to say that. Anyway, that is what’s happening right now. Our clan couldn’t turn a blind eye to the threat, so we decided to emerge from seclusion and help. Anyway, we all live on the continent, so we have to do our best to protect it,” said Park Deok-Gu.

“I feel like I just received serious news, and I’m a bit ashamed. Our clan hasn’t really been thinking about saving the world. We just want to make a living,” said Lee Chul-Woo.

“Well, the same goes for everyone else. And I think that’s why Father Lee Ki-Young is amazing. He’s too altruistic,” said Park Deok-Gu.

“You know him well,” Lee Chul-Woo replied.

“Of course. This Rift Land is actually a loss for him. According to the rumors, he set this up while being indebted to the Republic… He’s trying to save up military funds, so money is pretty tight for him. Think about it…” Park Deok-Gu paused.

“*Hm*…”

“I’m telling you to think about it from the perspective of the Blue Guild, the Black Swan Guild, the Red Mercenary Guild, and the other large guilds. Would you guys open the Rift Museum to ordinary people?” he asked.

“That’s…”

“I’m sure a few people will make that choice, but I can guarantee that the majority won’t do something like that. If the parties affiliated with those large guilds were to take turns in the dungeon, they could easily obtain all the items in the museum…”

”Why would they open this valuable dungeon to the public at this price? What kind of crazy guy would give others a chance to become stronger?”

”The reason is obvious… He believes that balanced growth is more important than anything else. I’m certain that our honorary cardinal thought that way when he allowed the public access to the Rift Museum!” exclaimed Park Deok-Gu.

“A balanced growth…” he repeated.

“That’s it! A balanced growth. You can obtain experience and items in the dungeon. No matter how you look at it, the parties involved in the dungeon decided to take on losses, and they are the reason we’re here!”

”What do you think our job is? It’s to grow as fast as we can and contribute to the upcoming threat. That’s the reason why our clan came to the Rift Museum. I’m sure it’s the same for others. Don’t you agree, everyone?” he asked.

“You got it right, Bark Sergei! You know how we feel despite being a Republican!”

“Of course! Indeed! Have a drink! It’s on us!”

“Thanks!”

The atmosphere became lively when Park Deok-Gu suddenly asked for the public’s

opinion, and the majority of the adventurers agreed with his comment.

There were even some parties that applauded and cheered for him. It seemed that the alcohol was starting to influence him because of his flushed face, but his words were valuable in a place like this. I was worried that my reputation was going to be ruined because of what had happened, but it seemed that I didn't have to worry.

'This pig… '

I couldn't help but think that he was a regressor as well. Well, it wasn't really a serious thought of mine, but I became suspicious of his past actions. This pig was extremely helpful at the most random times. It was true that his actions were often reminiscent of a trolling teammate, but he had always ended up being helpful when it was necessary.

He had to have received additional missions other than promoting the Rift Museum. I didn't know what kind of missions Lee Ji-Hye had given him, but it felt like he was doing more ad-libs than necessary.

I was sure that the stories he had told in the latter half of the conversation were things he had thought of on his own rather than because Lee Ji-Hye had told him to say them.

Park Deok-Gu started talking again, and it seemed like he was trying to wrap things up.

"*Ahem*, it's pretty late, so we should head back to our rooms."

The timing was kind of random, but this could be considered late. He knew our party was going on an expedition tomorrow, so he was trying to be considerate. After all, our party wouldn't be able to end this conversation first.

'Look at how considerate he is… '

I applauded him for that.

Lee Chul-Woo definitely noticed what Park Deok-Gu was trying to do as well because he revealed a grateful look.

"Yes, we also need to prepare early in the morning tomorrow… Thank you for the

advice and for what you did for us today, Mr. Bark Sergei," Lee Chul-Woo said.

"Adventurers should help each other out," Park Deok-Gu commented.

It was a heartwarming scene.

"Let's go, Miss Ki-Yeon," said Lee Chul-Woo.

"Okay, Mr. Chul-Woo."

The senior and the junior nodded and said goodbye to each other. Personally, the situation was a bit uncomfortable for me, but it was helpful for the Friendship Clan.

They get a lot of information, and they also learned the right mindset that they should always have in their minds and hearts.

'Indeed. This is a rare opportunity.'

Naturally, I joined the group and said goodbye to them while waving my hand.

Bark Sergei looked at me strangely at first before nodding.

"I hope we see each other again," Park Deok-Gu suggested.

It felt like I had overcome *that* obstacle, but I immediately realized that I was mistaken.

Knock! Knock!

I opened the door slightly and saw both Ahn Ki-Mo and Park Deok-Gu shaking a bottle of alcohol.

Park Deok-Gu was looking at me like a puppy.

"Come in," I told them.

Park Deok-Gu smiled brightly and said, "It's been a while, hyung-nim."

It really felt like it had been a while.

* * *

“Where is Ye-Ri?” I asked.

“She’s practicing her Dance of Enchantment. I’m sure she’s in her room and kicking her blanket. By the way, hyung-nim, why is your room so small? Can’t you move to a bigger room?” asked Park Deok-Gu.

“This is more than enough. It’s uncomfortable, but… it’ll be absurd to change rooms at this point. I’m already done unpacking as well,” I replied.

“You have a point. By the way… did you disguise as Lee Ki-Yeon to do an inspection or something?” he asked.

“Something like that. I was going to do a simple disguise, but I reckoned that a normal disguise wouldn’t possibly work. And this body doesn’t feel as uncomfortable as I thought,” I answered.

“I knew you looked familiar! I mean, your face looks kind of different, but I instantly recognized your smell,” he said.

“What kind of smell?” I asked.

“What do you think? You have a faint smell of medicine and a mixture of other things on you,” Park Deok-Gu replied.

“You made a deduction based on that?” I questioned.

“There’s something else, and it’s your bag! You carry that bag of yours everywhere, so there’s no way I won’t recognize it with just a glance. Your name is similar as well!”

”I didn’t notice it at first, but after thinking that it could be you, things started falling into place, and that’s when I made a deduction! You can fool a ghost, but you can’t fool my eyes!” yelled Park Deok-Gu.

“…”

“Should I call you noonim from now on?” asked Park Deok-Gu.

“Yeah, right. Just call me as usual. Mr. Ahn Ki-Mo, you can treat me like you did before as well. I mean, it has been a while since we shared a drink like this,” I told him.

“Thank you, Sub Guild Master. I’m really surprised. I could have never imagined that you would be so beautiful as a woman. If it weren’t for the glaring hint, which is your bag, I would have never suspected you,” Ahn Ki-Mo said.

“I’ll take that as a compliment. How’s the guild?” I asked.

“Nothing really changed. There are still a lot of things that have to be handled, so I’m really busy these days…”

”There is a lot more to do than I thought. As always, the guild master is busy as well. *Ah!* We haven’t contacted the guild master yet. Would it be fine if we contacted him right now? Or at least Miss Ha-Yan…” asked Ahn Ki-Mo.

“No, you don’t have to contact them. I don’t want you to worry about me when you’re already so busy. And please keep this to yourselves. Of course, you can at least tell Ye-Ri,” I requested.

‘Don’t let Jung Ha-Yan know, no matter what… ’

“I already told Ye-Ri,” Ahn Ki-Mo replied.

Thanks, Ki-Mo.

“I’m good at keeping secrets, so don’t worry about it,” Park Deok-Gu commented.

I can’t trust you, man.

Park Deok-Gu was pounding his chest while trying to reassure me, but I was afraid that he was going to run to Jung Ha-Yan and tell her what was going on.

Of course, it was true that Park Deok-Gu was usually good at keeping secrets, but he had always been ready to spill the beans when it came to Jung Ha-Yan.

I had no choice but to change the subject.

“By the way, how did you come up with that concept? A physical mage, as well as a berserker who’s crazy for blood? Mr. Ki-Mo?” I asked.

"*Ahem*, it just happened. It's just a role I have been wanting to do for quite a while now, and I'm trying to comfort myself by saying that it's a bit better than Dance of Enchantment," replied Ahn Ki-Mo.

"That's definitely… a bit overboard. That Ye-Ri has become cheeky. We should probably provide sexual education at some point at the guild," I suggested.

"Pfft!" Ahn Ki-Mo reflexively spat the mouthful of alcohol in his mouth. He definitely thought that I was joking based on his reaction.

It was nice that we were talking in such a cozy room, and it had definitely been a long time since we spent time like this. I couldn't even remember the last time I had drunk with Park Deok-Gu.

Park Deok-Gu had also gotten better when it came to conversations. Back then, I would easily get bored by his incessant talking, but it wasn't the case anymore because we conversed about various topics.

"How's your wound?" I asked.

"I'm fine. I'd rather die than lose my strength. Anyway, I should be the one asking you that. I heard the templars came by…" Park Deok-Gu muttered.

"I'm fine physically. I was kind of tired, but I think it's because of *that*…"

We decided to ask each other how we were doing.

"Sub Guild Master, when are you planning on ending this?" Ahn Ki-Mo asked.

"I'm just going to make a quick visit. It probably won't take long," I answered.

"*Hm*, I see. For some reason, I feel sad about letting things end this way. What do you think? How about we have another get-together after we're done with all this?" he suggested.

"I'm in," Park Deok-Gu chimed in.

"That sounds great," I replied.

We were talking about useless things, and I felt sad about having to end this fun

gathering. I glanced outside and saw that it was already deep in the night.

I spaced out when I realized that I would only get a few hours of sleep. Still, it would at least be four to five hours of sleep.

'I can just drink a fatigue recovery potion.'

My eyes were starting to close on their own. The quick-witted Ahn Ki-Mo noticed that, and he immediately realized that it was time for them to leave.

"Let's get going, Mr. Deok-Gu. He's going to a dungeon tomorrow, and we've already taken up a lot of his time," said Ahn Ki-Mo.

"*Ahem*, I'm a bit sad about ending this gathering like this. Hyung-nim, let's have fun for one more hour," Park Deok-Gu requested.

"Let's continue having fun after I leave the dungeon. I also want to spend more time, but I'm really tired," I told him.

"I guess there's nothing we can do about that…" he commented.

"Leave already, man. Let me sleep," I said, patting his shoulder.

At that, Park Deok-Gu forced himself up.

"We'll see you later, Sub Guild Master," Ahn Ki-Mo saId.

"Let me know if you need anything. I'll come here running," Park Deok-Gu told me.

"All right"

I opened the door and showed them out, but…

"*Ah*."

I heard a gasp.

I looked up and saw one of the female members of the Friendship Clan.

I wasn't sure why she was still out this late in the night, but she looked stupefied as

she stared alternatingly between Argimo and me.

However, her stupefaction quickly turned into disgust when she saw Bark Sergei exiting the room after Argimo.

She was staring at me as if I were some kind of disgusting bug or human scum.

I immediately realized that she would definitely misunderstand, so I gulped unknowingly.

"…"

"…"

"I think there's a misunderstanding here…" I muttered.

Light Ki-Yeon was now Bitch Ki-Yeon.

She quickly closed the door to her room as if she had seen something she wasn't supposed to see.

'My prim and proper image is ruined, shit…!'

The prim and proper reputation that I had been painstakingly building had collapsed after just one mistake.

CHAPTER 443
REMODELING THE RIFT MUSEUM

[You have entered the unranked dungeon, Rift Museum.]

[It has been confirmed that there are no restrictions on the number of participants.]

[Unranked Dungeon Forced Quest will be activated.]

[Quest - Museum Tour (0/1)]

I had to go through a grueling grind before we entered the Rift Museum.

'Shit… the pig left without fixing the situation.'

I had no time. As soon as I woke up in the morning, I had to run to the Rift Museum while enduring the contempt of the four female members.

I wanted to explain my side concerning last night's incident, but I couldn't do it because they were avoiding me as if I were some kind of dirty bug. I wasn't sure if Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon had heard the news, but it seemed that they either didn't believe the story or they had no idea what happened last night.

There was also a chance that they didn't really care because they were still approaching and were trying to talk to me as usual. Personally, I didn't think that they heard about last night's incident.

The better they were treating me, the glares of the four female members on me got even stronger. I wanted to make sure that I was in a good mood before heading for the museum, but there was a low chance that my mood would turn for the better.

'It's not like that… I'm Light Ki-Yeon, not Bitch Ki-Yeon… '

I mumbled to myself, but my words were useless.

Fortunately, the Rift Museum served as a great distraction. The party members started focusing on the museum's interior. I was familiar with the status windows and the interior, but there were subtle changes everywhere.

Of course, I had expected some changes.

I was familiar with the unranked dungeon Rift Museum, but for me, it actually looked like it had been reborn.

The most significant and obvious change was the interior design. Back then, the museum looked dull, but now, it looked like an actual museum. The second obvious change was the unrestricted number of people that could access the museum at the same time.

It seemed like there were hundreds of parties in the vast expanse of the museum, and when I saw how there were parties in the other rooms, I was sure that there were a lot more parties here than what my eyes could see right now.

I thought the battle would start right away, but it seemed that Max didn't choose to do things that way. After all, Max was proud of the Rift Museum, so there was no way he would use such a cheap trick. In addition, he definitely wanted to show off the museum's collection because showing off was one of Max—my son's hobbies.

Therefore, I was sure that the battle would start after the visitors had seen his collection.

Bark Sergei and Argimo's information was likely to be accurate.

The parties without prior information were pleasantly surprised, but the majority of the parties here seemed like they already knew about all this.

It couldn't really be helped because the rumors had to have already spread.

We were in a vast expanse akin to a cave. I started admiring the place, and Lee Chul-Woo broke the ice and said, "It's amazing. It's really amazing."

"Yes, I agree. I had never imagined that I would get to see something like this," I said.

'They definitely worked hard.'

There were items and monsters being displayed in the brand-new exhibition hall. The exhibition items that could be considered masterpieces were being displayed in places where people could easily see them.

The four female members, including Gook Minji, were busy looking around the museum.

It was only for a moment, but they looked like they had forgotten last night's incident. Of course, it wasn't just them. The other party members also started looking around the place.

- Welcome to the Rift Museum, Adventurers! I'm Max, and I'm the Manager of the Rift Museum.

A familiar voice rang out nearby. I turned my head and saw my son. It had been quite a while since I last saw him.

[Checking Max, the dungeon manager's information.]

[Reading the dungeon manager's dummy using Mind's Eye.]

[Dungeon Manager Max's Dummy]

[It's a clump of mana created by the manager, Max. Since it's a virtual body, the status window and information window cannot be checked. Unable to access limited information about the museum.]

'Yep, it's still the same.'

He was just a dummy, but I was still happy to see him because I could still remember how much he cried because he didn't want to be away from Smartie. I couldn't help but be reminded of Max's adorable side when I saw his dummy acting very serious and business-like.

- It seems that I have lots of visitors today. Before you begin the museum exploration, I'll share matters that require your attention and things you need to be aware of. The

exploration will begin after my explanation and after you're done looking around the museum. Once you've had enough of the exhibition hall, each party will split up and experience the museum. Please don't lose your party members during the exhibition!

- *Ah!* By the way, you'll receive a penalty if you touch the exhibition items without permission. Some items will cause you to get kicked out, while others will make us take serious actions, so please keep that in mind.

"Okay."

Things were going smoothly. He was the manager of the museum, but he was acting more like a guide.

- Before I give an official explanation, I think I should probably tell you the history of the museum first before anything else. The Rift Museum is a much older place than you think. The Rift Guardians had created this place to seal the rift and for the sake of history as well. For a long, uncountable number of years, the Rift Guardians locked themselves in this place and solely focused on sealing the rift. The items and figures in the museum are from the rift. Of course, there are items and chimeras that had been created in the museum, but this is the true identity of the Rift Museum.

"It's interesting," Lee Chul-Woo commented.

- The Rift Guardians succeeded in sealing the rift by sacrificing everything. However, they were worried about the balance and a few unknown threats. It is why they said that we always have to be vigilant of the rift. This museum was created for the purpose of keeping the rift in check. It is also probably the reason why the majority of the items dedicated to the exploration rewards are called treasures.

Everyone looked around with interest, and I could understand their reaction because the majority of them had no idea about the Rift Museum's history until now.

The information about the Rift Guardians spending an uncountable number of years to protect the continent and the items had never been released to the public, so I could understand their surprise.

Of course, I knew all that since I had been here before and I was a Rank Four Manager of the Rift Museum. Naturally, I wasn't surprised. However, there was no way I could have avoided being surprised when I saw what Max decided to present

to us next.

- Please look to the left, museum explorers. It's embarrassing, b-but let me introduce you to my mother and father, who brought me into this world.

'Why am I there?'

It was absurd, but I was locking arms with the Rift Guardian, Metel. In addition…

'Why is Metel pregnant?'

"Isn't that the honorary cardinal?"

"I'm sure he just looks like the honorary cardinal. It happened a long time ago, you know. His outfit is vastly different as well. I mean, the style is different."

"You think so?"

"He said that he's a Rift Guardian or whatever. I'm sure he's just someone who looks like the honorary cardinal."

- They have already gone, but…

'Don't just kill me off like that, son.'

- They are still alive in my heart.

- Guardian Metel, my mother, and my father did their best to manage and improve the Rift Museum. If it weren't for them, the Rift Museum and I wouldn't have existed today. Of course, the continent probably wouldn't have existed either.

It was so ridiculous that I couldn't help but laugh. I was stupefied when I saw the pregnant Metel, but it seemed that there were still more where that came from.

The sculpture that looked like me started moving slowly…

The sculpture started patting her belly, but even more absurd was how he kissed her belly and placed his ear on it. It became clear that he was truly taking care of Metel.

'He's like Gollum.'

The sight of the sculptures looking at each other lovingly was so heartwarming. I could feel their indescribable love, even though they were just sculptures.

'Max… who told you to make something like this? Who… asked you to hold a wedding of the souls… Max! Your dad is only human! I'm only human!'

I had never even managed to touch Metel's hand. Of course, I would never get to do that, so how did I even get her pregnant? Honestly, I had seen her before, but it was only once.

If Jung Ha-Yan were here, then I was sure that she would have cast a spell and blown those sculptures up.

The scene truly surprised me, but at the same time, I couldn't help but feel bitter.

After all, I had an idea why Max decided to create those sculptures.

'I should give him a hug when everything is done.'

I couldn't help but feel that I should spend time with him as father and son.

I made a sidelong glance at Max's dummy, and it was an absurd sight to see how a dummy was blushing. Of course, I was sure that the real Max was blushing as well.

'I feel bad for my son. He actually has such a bad father… '

- L-Let's move on. These items are legendary-ranked items. We have plenty of time, so take your time looking at them. I'll say it once more, just in case, but the items being displayed are under the protection of the system, so please be careful not to do anything that could raise suspicions.

"*Wow*."

"Look at this. Look… Chul-Woo oppa!" Gook Minji pointed out.

"Miss Ki-Yeon, come over here. They actually have a legendary-ranked staff as well," Lee Chul-Woo said.

"I see."

'I've already seen that staff, Chul-Woo. Please talk to the others instead of me.'

"It's a legendary-ranked staff. So the place really does have legendary-ranked items. It's even in the museum catalog." Lee Chul-Woo pointed out.

- Legendary-ranked items have a Very Low drop rate in the epic-ranked dungeons and a Low drop rate in legendary-ranked dungeons. Epic-ranked items have a Very Low chance of dropping in rare-ranked dungeons, but their drop rates are Normal in epic-ranked dungeons. Of course, there are mass-produced epic-ranked items here that could be found in the market as well, so please keep this in mind.

"Look at this! It's a mythic-ranked hammer. Tae-Geon oppa, items like this hammer are probably priceless, right?" Gook Minji asked.

"Miss Ki-Yeon, you should take a look at the robe. It can apparently drop in epic-ranked dungeons, and I think the drop rate is pretty good," Kim Tae-Geon said.

'Please just talk to the others, too, Kim Tae-Geon.'

- You might encounter legendary-ranked monsters. As for mythic-ranked monsters, we have three of them here, but we can only display one of them because extreme caution is required if we were to display the other two.

'Oh, it's been a while since I saw this one.'

I had already seen this one, but I still found it difficult to look at.

The mythic-ranked monster being displayed was the green-skinned monster sitting on a chair made of weapons. It had large horns and a large tail, and there were seven types of weapons floating around it.

It still looked the same as the last time I had seen it, and the humans who clapped their eyes on the monster unknowingly gulped a mouthful of their own saliva.

I was sure that they had the same thought as I did when I first saw this monster.

'How are we supposed to beat a monster like this?'

It was an overwhelming being. It was a monster that was beyond human comprehension. To make things worse, the monster was just a well-made imitation.

Max smiled because he was happy to see the humans talking amongst themselves.

- I'm sure you won't be able to defeat a mythic-ranked monster. *Ahem*. There was a small accident last time… We would have added the possibility of encountering mythic-ranked monsters during the exploration, but… I hope you'll understand.

The mythic-ranked monsters were completely sealed under the order of the Rank Four Museum Manager. It made sense because monsters like them shouldn't really exist in this world.

While I was thinking of the mythic-ranked monsters, I suddenly recalled how I couldn't inspect that green-skinned monster with Mind's Eye before.

"Didn't the system error say something about the difference in class? I think it'll work now… '

My Mind's Eye had grown, and I had also acquired a Semi-Mythic job. It could be said that I was already in the same class as the green-skinned monster. I was about to activate Mind's Eye, but I suddenly felt pain in my shoulders.

I was being pushed forward. I instinctively turned my head and saw Gook Minji's group, and it was ridiculous how they kept on talking among themselves without even apologizing for shoving me.

'Don't make me show my true colors, you bitches…!'

My patience was wearing thin.

CHAPTER 444
FIRST ONE TO CRY WINS (1)

I was quickly made an outcast. I was sure last night's incident was the reason behind it.

It was an incident that directly destroyed my prim and proper image, so I was sure that I would have done the same as them if I were in their shoes. After all, this expedition would determine the direction of the clan.

Despite that, I was actually out drinking and playing all night rather than resting and conserving my energy for tomorrow's expedition. I could understand where their criticism was coming from.

If this situation became worse, then they would immediately vote to kick me out of the party. The incident would also spread like wildfire, and I wouldn't be able to do anything about it.

Of course, there was a small misunderstanding. However, even if the misunderstanding were cleared, it wouldn't be enough for me to clear my name.

'Shit… '

However, I didn't expect that they would actually act on their hostility. They were even mocking me openly. I wasn't sure what they had in mind, but they looked happy at the thought of screwing me over. I didn't really like their faces, but Light Ki-Yeon just wasn't used to people screwing her over.

"*Pffft!*"

"*Heh.*"

"*Keke*."

The way they laughed at me made me feel dizzy.

"*Whoo*." I exhaled. I didn't really want to play along with them, but I was starting to get frustrated.

'Those bitches…!'

I looked up and saw people chattering from afar.

Max kept on talking as well.

'He should be able to notice me… '

If he looked at the party members one by one, I was sure that he would notice that I was Lee Ki-Young. After all, he had recognized back then that Kim Hyun-Sung was special and the fact that I had special eyes. Unfortunately, there were so many people that he had no time to look at each and every one of their faces. He was really busy.

'He sounds like he's having a lot of fun, too… '

It seemed like he was having fun because the explorers were reacting to his words. There were some who were taking notes as if they were studying, while others started sketching the monsters and the items being displayed in the museum.

This wouldn't be their only visit, so they were trying to discover more information about this place. Of course, there were also other people who were using different methods to investigate the museum.

However, the majority were looking around as if they were actually visiting a museum.

No dungeon would tell one the rewards ahead of time. One could only deduce what kind of items would drop based on the name and rank of the dungeon, so Rift Museum was unique because the possible dungeon clear rewards were being displayed.

Many explorers were looking around with excitement because they liked how the items were being displayed openly.

"Look at that."

"That is definitely a rare item…"

“It’s an uncommon type of weapon, but I want to try it. I’m also curious about its special ability…”

“I don’t think it’s going to sell well… Let’s look around more to see if there’s something worth targeting.”

The people around me sounded serious as they discussed the many displayed items among themselves. Max couldn’t stop smiling because of the Rift Museum’s popularity, and honestly, he looked like he was deriving strength from the visitors’ reactions.

It was also a bit funny to see him reacting to the people with reactions that were a bit louder than the others. From the looks of it, it seemed that he was still the Max, whom I was familiar with.

“But… is this all of it?”

- Of course not. These items aren’t the only items in this dungeon. We’re continuously collecting items that are historically valuable. We’re collecting relics all over the continent. If I were to exaggerate a bit, the majority of the items that are worth preserving are being collected and stored in the museum. Of course, you can obtain those items as rewards as well, and I’m sure the other items will surprise you.

“I see…”

- You also don’t have to worry about running out of items because the museum itself will refill the required quantity. Therefore, you really shouldn’t worry about anything else. Anyway, do you have any other questions?

“What’s the exact rate…”

- Even I can’t say for sure what’s the exact rate because the Rift Guardians were the ones who had decided on the drop rate… However, I’d like to tell you that everything is random, and I can also grant you an additional chance if possible. *Ah!* It’s about time we start exploring the museum. I’d like to look around the museum with you all day, but if we delay anymore, it’ll affect the parties that will enter after you…

- I would like all the explorers in the museum to move based on the golem’s instructions. Please be careful not to lose or mistake your party members for someone else. If you don’t follow the instructions, you will be forcibly removed from

this place.

“Miss Ki-Yeon, this way,” Lee Chul-Woo said.

“Okay, Mr. Chul-Woo.”

“Let’s move quickly.”

“Don’t stand in the way! The Legendary-ranked parties will head in first.”

Max’s remark about how people could be forcibly removed from the Rift Museum had to have been impactful because the parties were starting to move in a hurry. I was sure that they didn’t want to get kicked out after spending hundreds of gold.

It was such a ridiculous sight to see players standing in an orderly manner under the guidance of a magic golem. The parties who were in the exhibition halls started to gather in their respective positions.

Of course, our party started moving as well.

Kim Tae-Geon, who were perusing items related to his job from afar, and Gook Minji’s group, who looked like they were planning something, finally went over to where Lee Chul-Woo and I were located.

“Minji, you made an item list, right?” asked Lee Chul-Woo.

“Yeah. I couldn’t record all the items since I didn’t have time, but I checked all the useful ones. However, I don’t think it’ll be useful because the items displayed in the main exhibition hall will be difficult to get, and the same goes for the monsters.”

”I’m worried about encountering legendary-ranked monsters, but I think the chances of encountering them are low,” Gook Minji replied.

“All right, good job,” said Lee Chul-Woo to Gook Minji.

“I’m just doing my job,” she said.

“I don’t think we can do anything else aside from waiting right now. According to Bark Sergei, we should be able to rest in the interim. However, I think it’s best to start preparing for battle while we’re waiting…”

”You can snack on stuff so that you won’t have an upset stomach during the battle. Check your equipment as well. Of course, I’m sure that you’re already done checking your equipment this morning,” said Lee Chul-Woo.

“Well, I think there are people who still haven’t checked their equipment because they had no time to do it. This is a great opportunity for us to check our equipment, don’t you think so, Miss Ki-Yeon?” said Gook Minji.

She was clearly targeting me.

‘I didn’t have the time to check my equipment earlier.’

However, I got curious why she said something like that when we were about to enter the museum.

‘Shit… did she… ’

Kim Tae-Geon and Lee Chul-Woo still didn’t feel anything strange, but when I looked at the four female members, who were trying to hold in their laughter, I finally had an idea about what they were up to.

‘These insufferable bitches are really trying their best to kick me out. Don’t you guys need a mage?’

Honestly, there was a chance that they were thinking that Light Ki-Yeon was here to get a free ride on the bus. In other words, they were most likely thinking that they wouldn’t need me in the upcoming dungeon conquest.

It was likely that they believed that they could clear the dungeon without me after hearing Bark Sergei’s story last night. Of course, there was also a chance that they were relying on expedition insurance.

They could have just recruited another mage.

Still, if something were to go wrong, I still had people I could rely on.

I was only getting flustered and annoyed because I knew why they were only doing this right now.

‘They want to make me suffer.’

It was probably the reason they didn't tell Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geons about last night's incident, and I was sure that they wanted to screw me over at the right time.

Those who were skilled in screwing other people over would definitely be able to create such a scheme and think ahead. Of course, what they were doing wasn't really anything serious, but it soured my mood.

'And you guys call yourselves human?'

One shouldn't treat their fellow innocent adventurer like this, especially when the adventurer in question was innocent.

I was about to say something, but Gook Minji interrupted me.

"Hey, oppas, can you smell that?" asked Gook Minji.

"Smell what?" Kim Tae-Geon asked.

"I'm not sure, but I smell something rotting. I can smell a loser who is rotten from the roots, and I can smell her cheapness as well. Am I the only one who can smell that?" Gook Minji asked.

"I can smell it as well."

"Me, too."

"*Bleh. Bleck…!*"

"…"

Kim Tae-Geon and Lee Chul-Woo got worried that the female members ate something bad, but I was sure that they would soon realize what Gook Minji was trying to do.

"Hey, oppas."

"What? What's going on?" Kim Tae-Geon asked.

"Well, I think you should ask that woman. I think the smell is coming from her," said

Gook Minji while pointing at me.

“What?”

“Minji, you shouldn’t be talking like that. How many times have I told you not to talk like that!” Lee Chul-Woo yelled.

“I’m saying this for a reason, Chul-Woo oppa… There’s a reason for all this. She has never been an adventurer. She’s just a piece of trash trying to get a free ride…”

”We don’t have to enter the dungeon with her. I do feel kind of sad about how we wasted time trying to recruit her, but I’m sure it’ll be better for us if she’s not with us inside,” she explained.

“Minji!” yelled Lee Chul-Woo.

“In the first place, this woman has never been serious about this expedition. Her goal had always been to seduce you guys so she could acquire a new identity. I don’t think I would want to be in a dungeon with someone who has sold both her body and soul,” Gook Minji continued.

“Apologize to her right now.” Lee Chul-Woo ordered.

“No, I can’t do that. Ask her about what happened last night,” she told him.

“What?”

“Mi-Jung unni said that she saw her last night,” she replied.

“Saw what?” Lee Chul-Woo asked.

“She saw Bark Sergei and Argimo exiting her room last night,” she answered.

“Is that true?” he asked.

“Yes, I saw them with my own eyes, Chul-Woo oppa, Tae-Geon oppa. Our eyes even met,” Mi-Jung replied.

“…”

"…"

"There's a misunderstanding…" I said.

"I wonder what a man and a woman can do in the middle of the night? You were aware that you had an upcoming expedition, right, Miss Ki-Yeon? Actually, is the expedition even important to you?

"I was going to keep it to myself. The atmosphere of the party was good, and I didn't want to ruin it like this, but you went overboard…

"I couldn't take it anymore, so I decided to tell everyone. This dungeon exists for adventurers like us, not for people like you," said Gook Minji.

"Wait…"

"How should we do this? Do you want to leave the party on your own? Or should we kick you out?" Gook Minji asked.

'Shit.'

I looked around because I had to see everyone's reactions. First of all, I looked at Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon's reactions. These two men were the only ones who could support me, but their expressions were strange. I wasn't sure about Gook Minji, but this woman named Mi-Jung seemed like she wasn't the type of person who would lie.

Everyone looked like they were demanding an explanation from me. I had been living a political life all this while, so I was surprised to see someone else using politics to corner me.

Naturally, I had a solution to all this, but before I could organize my thoughts, my eyes made their moves first. Tears welled up so fast in my eyes that I didn't even notice that I was already crying.

"*Hiccup. Heuuuk*."

Obviously, the sobbing sounded strange in my ears, but I knew all too well that in this situation…

‘The first one to cry wins… ’

Crocodile tears started rolling down my cheeks not even half a second later since they started welling up in my eyelids.

“*Hiccup…!*”

CHAPTER 445
FIRST ONE TO CRY WINS (2)

I had other choices, but before I could choose, the tears that unknowingly fell down my cheeks told me that crying was the best answer.

Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon looked as if they didn't know what to do.

"It's not what it looks like…" I told them.

"*Ha*…"

Obviously, the four female members looked annoyed and looked as if they were asking what I was trying to pull. They had probably never expected me to cry, so they were trying to read the room to come up with a countermeasure.

'Don't challenge me if you're not prepared to win, bitches.'

They humiliated me publicly, and I was sure that they were already thinking that victory was theirs after they obtained Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon's support. They had already suggested kicking me out, and they would have directly demanded to kick me out if it weren't for my tears.

Yes, my tears instantly ruined their plans.

My cries were so heart-wrenching that everyone went silent.

'It sounds distressing in my ears as well.'

"*Heuuuk*…!"

Obviously, the girls chose to stand their ground.

"*Wow*, are you serious right now? Why are you even crying?"

"*Hiccup*…!"

“Do you really think that crying will change anything? Ridiculous!”

“What a crazy bitch.”

“Seriously… *Ha*.”

Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon were already under the effects of my tears, so the girls’ complaints weren’t working. They stood reliably in front of me and protected me from Gook Minji and the other girls. The way they stood there made them look as reliable as the Berlin Wall and the walls of Castle Rock.

They also looked like they were ready to protect me from any slander. Public opinion had already turned against me, but I was thankful because these two still decided to stand by my side.

It seemed that playing the victim card was more effective if I were to use it while disguising as Light Ki-Yeon rather than Light Ki-Young.

“What are you guys trying to do here?” Kim Tae-Geon asked.

“You heard it just now. She isn’t the type of woman you guys think she is. I knew she was strange when she came up to us to join the expedition without knowledge of the basics and with basically nothing. I bet that she won’t be any help in the dungeon at all, and I’m sure that she will just endanger us all, Gook Minji replied.

“How many times have I told you not to do anything stupid, Gook Minji?” Kim Tae-Geon questioned.

“Stupid? I’m doing this for the sake of the party. She’s lying to you guys,” she answered.

“Are you okay, Miss Ki-Yeon? Please stop crying…” Lee Chul-Woo didn’t know what to do.

“*Hiccup*.”

The surroundings got noisy as Kim Tae-Geon dealt with Gook Minji and the others, and I couldn’t stop crying even though Lee Chul-Woo was trying his best to comfort me.

It seemed that the old saying about how victory would belong to those who cried first was true.

"*Wow,* this is really absurd. Seriously," Gook Minji complained.

"Do you really want to do this?" Kim Tae-Geon asked.

"Gook Minji!" Lee Chul-Woo called out.

"It's not our fault! You heard the conversation earlier," she yelled.

"I'm sure it's just a misunderstanding. Miss Ki-Yeon isn't that kind of person," replied Lee Chul-Woo.

'You don't even know me, so how can you say something like that, Chul-Woo? Anyway, thanks. I won't forget what you did to me today, but you shouldn't trust people so easily.'

"Misunderstanding, my ass! Mi-Jung unni saw it herself. Tell me, Miss Ki-Yeon. Am I wrong? You saw my unni earlier this morning, right?" she asked.

My response to that question was extremely important. I was pushing the envelope just a bit with the response I had prepared, but I had no choice but to use it.

"T-they just gave me an offer—*hiccup*—to join their clan. I was surprised as well… It's really not what you're—*hiccup*—thinking. Real—" I replied.

Gook Minji interrupted. "A clan recruitment that early in the morning? What kind of nonsense are you spouting? Who would believe in that kind of nonsense?"

'Who? Your oppas, of course.'

"T-they were just about to leave early in the morning—*Hiccup!*" I replied.

"Can you speak properly?" Gook Minji said with raised brows.

"I'm sorry—*Hiccup.* I-I'm sorry," I stuttered.

"No, you don't have to apologize, Miss Ki-Yeon," Lee Chul-Woo said.

“I’m sorry. I’m… sorry…” I repeated.

I was actually choking up, so who would believe that I was merely acting?

I felt so aggrieved and wronged that my sobbing prevented me from speaking properly, and I naturally looked childish. Of course, the four female members were the only ones who felt frustrated because I looked like someone who could neither control her emotions nor speak properly under pressure.

Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon did their best to calm me down because they felt that something was wrong.

“You don’t have to say anything,” Lee Chul-Woo said.

“Don’t tell me that you believe her… Do you really think that they actually came early in the morning just to recruit her? I wonder where the clan master was while they were recruiting her. You don’t expect us to believe that, right? I’m sure even you won’t believe your own excuses because of how absurd it sounds.” Gook Minji pointed out.

“I’m sorry—*Hiccup*! It’s… my fault,” I apologized.

“It’s not your fault, Miss Ki-Yeon. You don’t have to apologize,” Lee Chul-Woo repeated.

“No… It’s my…” I trailed off.

‘I am justice.’

“…fault.” I continued.

‘Cute is justice, and I’m Light Ki-Yeon!’

“Are you really going to keep on playing the victim?!” Gook Minji screamed.

“I’m sore…”

Naturally, I moved into Lee Chul-Woo’s arms as if I couldn’t handle it anymore. The innocent man was kind of surprised, but I guess he wasn’t dense and dumb because he started patting my shoulder.

'He'll be a dumbass if he doesn't pat me, at the very least.'

I couldn't see his face, but I was sure that he was blushing. Obviously, I wasn't planning on stopping here. I started sobbing while in his arms.

For the final blow, my plan was to smile at the girls because the more worked up they were, the more advantageous it would be for me.

I turned my head slightly while I was still in Lee Chul-Woo's arms. My eyes met with Gook Minji's eyes. I wasn't sure whether I got lucky or not, but the other female members were still talking to Kim Tae-Geon.

Seeing that, I decided to deal the final blow.

I was still crying, but I smiled smugly at Gook Minji when our eyes met.

I was sure that I looked like a cunning fox in Gook Minji's eyes because her face started trembling, and I wanted to compliment her for doing a good job of suppressing her anger.

I couldn't help but be surprised because I had always been famous as the walking provoking totem. I was sure that not even the servants of demons would be able to suppress their anger after seeing my smile.

Of course, everything happened in the blink of an eye. I looked away from Gook Minji and rested my head against Lee Chul-Woo's wide chest. The moment I started acting cute, I heard a loud scream.

"Get away from him, you fox!" Gook Minji screamed.

"…"

"Watch your mouth, Gook Minji!" Lee Chul-Woo yelled.

"You didn't see her just now? You saw it, right?! She smiled at me. Shit! She smiled at me!" Gook Minji yelled.

"Gook Minji!" shouted Lee Chul-Woo.

"You…!" she pointed at me.

'You're pathetic, Minji.'

She suddenly charged at me like a mad woman. Lee Chul-Woo stood in front of me to protect me, but he was a priest with a weak body, so there was no way he could stop an agile thief. In the end, Gook Minji hit my arm.

"*Kyaaaaaaah!*"

I was sure that she simply wanted to shove me away, but I revealed a Hollywood-worthy stunt and rolled on the ground a few times. The horrified Lee Chul-Woo quickly helped me up, and the furious Gook Minji had to have realized that she had made a mistake because her expression turned pale.

The other members were shocked as well.

Anyway, she shoved me, and I got hurt. Of course, it was technically my fault that I got hurt, but it was ultimately *her* fault that I got hurt. No matter what angle one would use to look at this situation, the assailant and victims could be easily deduced.

Naturally, the *Berlin Wall* got furious.

"I-I'm s—" Gook Minji started.

"What do you think you're doing?!" Lee Chul-Woo yelled angrily.

"O-Oppa…" Gook Minji stuttered.

"The expedition hasn't even started yet… Do you really have to act like this?!" he yelled.

"That's not—" Gook Minji started.

However, she was interrupted once more as Lee Chul-Woo continued. "Do you even realize what you're doing right now? Stop it, Gook Minji, please!"

"Why are you doing this? This party isn't even permanent; it's only temporary! Is it really that hard for you to endure it? Have you always been this kind of person?!"

'There goes the famous line! Have you always been this kind of person?! Nice one, Chul-Woo! You can become a great actor! Your dramatic lines are awesome!'

“Oppa, that’s not it. That woman—”

“I don’t want to hear it. I don’t want to see you right now, Minji,” he interrupted her.

“O-Oppa…” she called out.

I pitied Gook Minji a bit when she started crying because I felt bad about going this far against a bunch of worthless rookies. She was crying, but it wasn’t that effective because I cried first.

Lee Chul-Woo was definitely important to Gook Minji because her expression right now made her seem like she had just gotten abandoned by her parents. However, it seemed that Mr. Chul-Woo wasn’t done just yet as his cold voice filled the room.

“Apologize.”

“*Huh?*”

“Apologize to Miss Ki-Yeon right now. I want you to apologize properly,” he ordered.

“But…”

“Don’t disappoint me anymore, Minji. I’m saying this as *nicely* as I can. Apologize,” he repeated.

Lee Chul-Woo was basically telling her to swallow her pride. Swallowing one’s pride was difficult to do, but Gook Minji approached me slowly.

I was worried that she would take out her dagger, but I couldn’t help but think that she wasn’t actually *that* crazy when I saw her bowing in front of me while biting her lips. It seemed that she knew that all of this was because she made an impulsive decision.

“I’m… sorry. *Sniff!*” Gook Minji apologized.

“…”

“I-I’m sorry. *Sniff*…! It’s… my fault,” she repeated.

‘All right, it’s fine. As long as you know your place, Minji. You shouldn’t have messed

with your unni like that unless you have enough social skills. You're supposed to cry first because it'll be more advantageous for you.'

I honestly wanted to corner her even more.

However, Gook Minji had already done this much, so I decided to just return the gesture in kind. We still had an expedition to do, and it wouldn't be good for us to watch each other's backs while we were frustrated and secretly angry at each other.

"No… I should… be the one who should apologize. I should have said something to prevent the misunderstanding," I replied.

I held her hand and even hugged her lightly.

At last, our tiny war was over, and the other female members apologized to me as well.

"I think I misunderstood. I'm sorry, Miss Ki-Yeon."

"I'm really sorry."

"I'm sorry."

"It's fine. I'm okay, so please don't bow like this. It's my fault for causing the misunderstanding," I told them.

'You've become too nice, Ki-Yeon.'

Normally, I would have destroyed these rude bitches, but since I ended things here without going too far, it meant that I was worthy of receiving their genuine apology and gratitude.

"You're so kind…" Kim Tae-Geon muttered.

Of course, he was right…

CHAPTER 446
CRACKS IN THE FRIENDSHIP CLAN'S FRIENDSHIP (1)

'Will it really be okay for us to go on just like this?'

Lee Chul-Woo's dark expression perfectly represented the current situation. The Friendship Clan lacked money for them to achieve something great. In addition, the conflict from earlier had brought dark clouds over the party.

I accepted their apology while burying my head in the sand, and I forcefully created a friendly atmosphere. Unfortunately, it didn't mean that the effects of the conflict earlier would simply disappear.

It got a lot better than before, but Gook Minji still didn't look like she had any plans of playing chummy. I was sure that she was planning on just staying quiet for the rest of the expedition while suppressing her turbulent emotions.

She wasn't picking a fight with me anymore, but she still looked hostile to me.

If I were the clan master of the Friendship Clan, I would have made the party abandon the expedition because the party couldn't possibly fight properly at this point.

However, the Friendship Clan couldn't do something like that after they had spent so much money on the Epic dungeon entrance fee, Rare rooms, insurance, et cetera.

If they were to return without accomplishing anything, then it would mean falling into debt.

'This is going to be a headache… '

The right thing to do here was to retreat and reorganize the party. Unfortunately, it was clear that everyone else also knew that the clan couldn't possibly abandon the expedition because it wouldn't be able to endure the losses.

I was worried that I caused too much of a commotion, but fortunately, they bought insurance. Otherwise, I was sure that they would abandon the expedition even if they would suffer huge losses.

It wasn't really strange because nothing was more valuable than life, after all.

Gook Minji's party caused the current situation.

Of course, I felt bad as well because I was partly responsible for it.

"Don't worry too much. I'll do my best," I said.

"No, it's fine. Miss Ki-Yeon. Don't overdo it. Just follow our instructions. If there's a problem, we'll do our best to handle it from our side," Lee Chul-Woo reassured me almost immediately.

'This guy… '

It was clear that he didn't really have any expectations of me. I understood why he was acting that way, but I felt extremely disappointed that he was also looking at me that way.

'Think what you want. Your noona here will take care of everything.'

The majority of the people around me in the Blue Guild were monsters, but I wasn't that weak either. I was confident that I could at least survive an epic-ranked dungeon—no, I was confident of my competence.

Of course, I couldn't use my skills to create dragon wings and tails because that would blow my cover, but I was once an epic Bioalchemist. The skills I had learned as Bioalchemist should prove useful in this dungeon.

I wasn't carrying a bag full of Legendary-ranked catalysts, but I was still confident in my skills. Still, it was true that I wouldn't be able to do much against monsters that were stronger than me, but Light Ki-Yeon wasn't weak to the point that she would fail to conquer a mere Epic-ranked dungeon.

Wait, actually, Light Ki-Yeon should be strong enough to be an overlord here.

While I was nodding to myself, Kim Tae-Geon was doing his best to manage the

emotions of the party members.

'Yeah, that's the least you can do.'

In addition to speaking to Gook Minji privately, he also started taking care of the other female members. It didn't look effective, but it was better than nothing.

Gook Minji's group looked a lot better after Kim Tae-Geon's pep talk, and I got a strong feeling that they were going to endure it until the end of the expedition.

I noticed that two of Gook Minji's party members seemed like they didn't like this party as much as they liked it earlier, but they would probably do their best until the end. It was only natural because they had invested a lot in this clan.

This was just my assumption, but I had a feeling that the Friendship Clan would struggle to keep its members after this expedition. Gook Minji only really cared about Lee Chul-Woo, so she was probably going to stay here, but it wasn't the case for the others.

The air around them felt so weird that I felt like they would directly fall apart once the expedition was over. I was sure that both Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon could feel that as well, and it was probably the reason why they were talking nicely to the others.

It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the fate of this clan depended on the results of this expedition. Yes, that had to be the case seeing the determined looks on the faces of the Friendship Clan's core members.

- One minute left until the Friendship Clan's turn…

"Let's go, everyone. There was a minor conflict, but please don't think about what happened earlier once we get inside. Minji," Lee Chul-Woo called out.

"I'll do my best, oppa, and I'm sorry once again," Gook Minji apologized to me once more.

"No, I should be the one who should apologize, Miss Minji," I replied.

- Please enter the Epic Museum Battle Room. There will be three waves of monsters, and there's a High chance that an epic-ranked named monster will appear. There will

also be three waves of random rewards. The battle will start as soon as you spin the wheel on the left side of the battle room, so please keep that in mind.

'The wheel still exists?'

"It's an interesting system."

"Right? It's kind of childish, but it's still dangerous. Is everyone…" Lee Chul-Woo asked.

"We're ready."

"Me too, oppa."

"I'm ready. too."

"Okay, let's get started," he said.

[The wheel is spinning.]

Everyone looked at the wheel nervously. If a powerful monster spawned, then we would have difficulties fighting the next wave, so they were hoping that a rare-ranked monster would spawn.

It was the only way that would make all this worth it.

However, it seemed that it wouldn't be that easy to conquer this dungeon.

[The wheel has stopped.]

[The low-grade epic-ranked named monster, Spirit of the Fallen Tree Ambrosia, has been selected.]

'It's not bad at all.'

Earth elemental monsters were easier to defeat compared to other monsters at the same rank. They were miles better to deal with compared to the Undead or monsters with poison attributes.

Fire elemental monsters were famous for being extremely hard to handle because they would drain one's stamina even if one simply stood near them. Fire element artifacts were common, but earth element artifacts were a bit rare.

"Not bad."

"This is our first time, and it seems that we got lucky enough to get a good one. Prepare for battle, everyone. We'll start by studying its pattern. I'll leave it to you, Tae-Geon," Lee Chul-Woo instructed.

"Okay."

"Please refrain from attacking or using magic until it has been completely aggroed. I'll give you a separate signal, Miss Ki-Yeon," he said.

"All right," I answered.

"Let's go."

The sound of chains being dragged across the floor could be heard as a rotten tree appeared. It was bigger than we thought, so the calm expressions of the members disappeared. Actually, it was better to be slightly nervous.

Kim Tae-Geon started running, and the priest, Lee Chul-Woo, started pouring all sorts of buffs on him. Gook Minji stared intently at Kim Tae-Geon in case something unexpected happened.

Their movements weren't as bad as I thought. They were decent, and their positioning was sufficient as well. However, it didn't take that long for me to change my mind.

'Wait… what are those guys doing?'

It was ridiculous how Kim Tae-Geon rushed toward the monster with confidence and

started fighting it one-on-one. I could understand his desire to show his bravery to the world, but this was a party hunt rather than a solo hunt.

He was so ignorant and naive that it would be an insult to Park Deok-Gu if I were to compare him to Park Deok-Gu. After all, even Park Deok-Gu knew how to make space that his party members could use.

'Wait, could it be that Deok-Gu is actually skilled…?'

Honestly, Lee Chul-Woo was the same as Kim Tae-Geon. His skills were a far cry from Sun Hee-Young, who was the main priest of the Blue Guild. There were idiots out there who thought that the priest's job only involved just healing and giving buffs, but their job actually required mastering the art of timing, skill management, and mana management.

Knowing the right timing to use their skills was just as important as possessing a large amount of holy power. The most ridiculous part of all of this was that those two guys were the *better* members of the party.

I turned to look at Gook Minji and saw her doing nothing but jumping around and distracting the tank. The ranger was also shooting arrows for some reason, even though Kim Tae-Geon was still building up aggro. As for the woman whose job was to be a tank-hybrid-dps, I actually couldn't understand what she was doing.

If I were to compare her to a member of the Blue Guild, I would say that her role was similar to Jo Hye-Jin's. Unfortunately, she seemed confused about what she was supposed to do.

The worst one among them was the main DPS of the party, and she was the woman wielding a sword. She was the worst, but her role was extremely important and was equivalent to Kim Hyun-Sung's role in the Blue Guild.

'They're complete garbage. And they… call themselves players?'

It didn't make sense to compare them to our party, and I actually felt bad for my party members at the Blue Guild for comparing them to these people.

Not even the Blue Guild was as bad as the Friendship Clan, even when the members were still epic-ranked players. Individually, our stats were lower back then, but our teamwork was miles better than the circus in front of me.

'These guys don't know how to hunt.'

I was sure that they never had a mentor. I guess the difference between them and us was the fact that we had a strict regressor guiding us from the start.

I was sure that they had no idea what I was thinking because they looked proud of what they had done.

"It's a good start." Lee Chul-Woo remarked, looking proud of the Friendship Clan.

Gook Minji hadn't really done anything, but she was smiling for some reason. I deduced that she was just trying to brag to me.

"I think we can start attacking!" Kim Tae-Geon yelled.

'Wait, you guys weren't attacking it all this while?'

"Okay…" I replied reluctantly.

"Please don't overdo it. Please save your mana and be as efficient as possible… We can take care of it," Lee Chul-Woo reminded me.

'Are you sure?'

"Okay."

He was getting annoying. I actually didn't want to do this, but I wanted to show them the power of a Semi-Mythic player. I placed my hand into my Infinity Bag and grabbed a catalyst that I thought I would never get to use.

[Fire Giant's Refined Magic Powder - Legendary Rank]

It was an extremely expensive catalyst, and it wouldn't be profitable to use a catalyst like this against an epic-ranked monster. Of course, money didn't really matter to the rich Light Ki-Yeon.

Therefore, I decisively snapped my fingers.

A large fist covered in flames started falling from the sky.

“Mr. Tae-Geon, wait,” I said.

“Okay.”

Fortunately, he was quick on the uptake. He started moving away fast when the spell started falling, and when I snapped my fingers again, a large hand popped out from the ground and grabbed the monster.

‘Why is it still alive?’

It was a legendary-ranked catalyst, but it seemed that it wasn’t as strong as I believed. It wasn’t as efficient as I thought as well. It would have been better if I used Dialugia’s catalyst, but right now, my arsenal only contained Unique and Epic alchemy spells.

Obviously, my attack dealt a lot of damage, but it was unfortunate that it didn’t manage to kill the monster in one blow.

I snapped my fingers again, and another large fist fell from the sky.

I snapped my fingers again, and the upper body of the Fire Giant manifested.

The Fire Giant looked extremely overwhelming compared to the tree spirit that it was treating as a punching bag. The Spirit of the Fallen Tree resisted and roared as if it was being wronged, but the Fire Giant wasn’t going to stop punching it.

Crack!

Booooooom!

Craaaaaack!

Boooom!

Craaaaack!

Booooooooom!

The combined price of the catalysts I had sacrificed to manifest the Fire Giant was astronomical, but the members of the Friendship Clan were ignorant of my sacrifice.

They stared at the savage beatdown with their mouths agape.

"No… way…"

'Yes, way!'

CHAPTER 447
CRACKS IN THE FRIENDSHIP CLAN'S FRIENDSHIP (2)

The scene was a mess, and rocks were flying everywhere. Naturally, Ambrosia got completely destroyed by the Fire Giant. It looked scorched, and it was swaying. It was clearly having a hard time even standing up.

The monster was lucky that the Fire Giant stopped there, but I personally felt kind of sad. The result was great, but the monster was still alive, even though it had been beaten up until it was on the brink of dying.

The others were naturally greatly surprised by my prowess.

I was sure Lee Chul-Woo, Kim Tae-Geon, and the others weren't expecting anything grand from me. They probably thought that it would be great if I could carry my own weight, but upon witnessing my true power, their jaws fell to the floor in shock.

The four girls were looking at each other, and their stupefaction meant that Light Ki-Yeon had done something amazing.

I only cast a few spells to defeat a mere epic-ranked monster, but they were probably looking at me right now as if I were Jung Ha-Yan. When I swept my gaze across them, I got the feeling that my assumption was true.

Lee Chul-Woo and Kim Tae-Geon rubbed their eyes while Gook Minji and the other girls turned pale.

'Now I'm reliable, right?'

It was a bit of a rude awakening, but my actions were the answer to the question of why Bark Sergei and Argimo visited me early in the morning to recruit me covertly. At last, they were finally able to solve the puzzle.

'They obviously came to recruit me because I'm skilled, you bitches! I'm on a whole

different level than you guys. You guys misunderstood me because you've never been recruited before.'

A deafening silence blanketed the surroundings when the battle ended. The silence seemed like it would last for quite a while as I thought about how I should act from now on because I went overboard with showing off my skills.

There was no way I could make an excuse and say that I simply got lucky that the epic-ranked monster was weaker than average epic-ranked monsters. Fortunately, it seemed that there was no need for me to say anything.

Before I could even think of what to say, Kim Tae-Geon exclaimed, "Amazing…! That was really amazing."

"How did you do that, Miss Ki-Yeon?" Lee Chul-Woo asked.

"*Huh?* I just cast what I normally cast… Can't ordinary mages do that as well?" I asked.

"No. I'm sure that ordinary mages can't match your firepower. Your casting speed is extremely fast as well, and your magic power is above epic rank," Lee Chul-Woo replied.

'Of course. I used a legendary-ranked catalyst, so there's no way that its magic power can only be comparable to an epic-ranked spell.'

"I-I'm sorry…" Gook Minji stuttered.

'What are you guys apologizing about this time?'

"No, there's no need to apologize," I told them.

"I think we misunderstood—"

"I get that a lot, and I'm used to it already. You *really* don't have to worry," I said.

"We're really sorry, unni. It was my fault," Mi-Jung said.

'Since when did I become your unni?'

“It’s fine, Miss Mi-Jung. It happens,” I told her.

‘These bitches changed their attitudes pretty fast.’

“You don’t have to speak so formally. We can call you Ki-Yeon unni, right?” asked another girl.

‘They’re really amazing. If I were in their shoes, I would be too ashamed to say something like that.’

“Of course,” I replied.

“Your magic stat didn’t seem high, but you’re really amazing!” Gook Minji said as she quietly joined the conversation.

‘It feels pretty great to be powerful.’

I was simply playing and having fun right now, but it still felt pretty great to be acknowledged. I finally understood why most dragons in those novels often walked around pretending to be humans.

I couldn’t really explain it, but there was a pleasant tingling all over my body.

‘All right, I’ll show you more.’

“*Ah!* While we were in battle earlier, there were some parts that bothered me a bit. Do you mind if I tell you?” I asked Lee Chul-Woo.

“Go ahead, Miss Ki-Yeon,” Lee Chul-Woo replied.

“Well… before joining this party, I was part of the Named Monster Response Team of the Red Mercenary Guild. It’s up to you whether you’ll accept my comments or not, but I noticed a few things,” I started.

“The Red Mercenary Guild?” asked Lee Chul-Woo, seemingly dumbfounded.

“Yes, but it was only temporary,” I added.

“Is that true? *Wow,* please feel free to speak,” Lee Chul-Woo hurriedly said.

“I hope you don’t take it the wrong way,” I said.

“We won’t…”

“First, Mr. Tae-Geon seems to be kind of self-centered. Of course, you carry the burden of fighting the monster face-to-face, but it’d be better if you widen your view a bit while trusting your priest. The party also has a sub-tank, you know?” I told him.

Kim Tae-Geon’s face turned red, and I thought that I shouldn’t have said anything, but my words would be useful later on. This time, I talked to the sub-tank, who was a part of Gook Minji’s party.

“And did you know that a sub-tank's job isn’t just to appear when the main tank is out of steam? I’m not sure if the two of you can’t communicate properly, but I felt like there weren’t any swapping…”

”The sub-tank has to be more reliable so the main tank can be a bit more relaxed,” I pointed out.

“*Ah*… okay,” the girl replied.

“The two of you need to fulfill your roles properly, so our melee damage dealers will have enough space to attack,” I added before turning to look at Gook Minji. ”The party isn’t expecting much from those with thief-related class, Miss Minji. It’s fine to keep moving, but your movements are actually making people nervous…”

”It’d be better if you provide ranged support. You know how to use a crossbow, right? Once the monster has been fully aggroed, it would be better if you changed to melee, but it wasn’t the case earlier,” I said.

‘You’re not even Kim Ye-Ri, so you should stop moving like you are Kim Ye-Ri.’

“The melee damage dealers in the party have the most awkward positions. Their endurance and stamina stats are low, so it’s only natural for them to be careful, but they’re playing *very* defensively…”

”I understand that you’re trying not to get hurt, but you need to deal damage to be useful. If an attack comes flying toward you, you have to either dodge or trust that your tank will block the attack and keep fighting. It sounds a bit cruel, but you have to be prepared to get hurt, and it’s the same for the ranged members…” I swept my

gaze across the others and asked, “You know that shooting arrows before the monster is aggroed only gives the tank more stress, right?”

“Yes.”

“And I also feel like you’re wasting your holy power, Mr. Chul-Woo. Mr. Tae-Geon is skilled enough to face that monster earlier without all those buffs. After the first buff, you should have given those buffs to the melee damage dealers…”

”In addition, you should also think about when you should use your heal. You have to make sure that you’re done channeling a healing spell before the enemy executes a powerful attack. That way, you can use your healing spell as soon as the attack lands. It will also mean that the monster will have no gap to exploit,” I suggested.

“I see…” Lee Chul-Woo muttered.

“Individually, your skills are great, but you guys seem out of place. You’ll achieve better results if you try to understand the position and role of each party member,” I added.

I was honestly worried that I was being *too* straightforward, but it seemed that they wouldn’t turn hostile just because of what I said to them. Of course, the powerful skills I had shown them earlier were playing a big part.

Naturally, I also made sure to point out the mistakes of the related members when I pointed out the mistakes of a certain member in a certain role. For example, when I told the tank about his mistakes, I also made sure to say that the sub-tank and the priest could have done a better job supporting him.

It was the same when I pointed out the mistakes of the sub-tank—I made sure to say that the melee damage dealers could have done a better job.

This way, everyone would be held accountable for their own mistakes. If I had criticized them individually, then they would have simply gotten angry at me. As such, I made sure to point out their mistakes as a party; this way, they might change.

‘Amazing. Really amazing. You’re too nice, Ki-Yeon.’

Light Ki-Yeon was too nice to the point that I started questioning whether I was providing too many services to a party that I would only be with temporarily.

As expected, they started acknowledging their mistakes. Even more surprising was that the party members were now trying their best to impress me. It felt like they were trying to get the attention of a recruiter from a large guild.

'That's a great attitude to have—yes, that kind of enthusiasm is important. You guys have talent, and you'll definitely get offers.'

The Blue Guild wouldn't recruit them, but a large guild might offer to assimilate the Friendship Clan.

"Let's get the reward for now… and would you be willing to do things my way for the next named monster? I'll take care of any unexpected situations," I offered.

"I'd appreciate it, Miss Ki-Yeon. I'm ashamed because it feels like we're the ones getting help rather than the other way around," Lee Chul-Woo replied.

"It's fine. I'm glad that I'm being helpful. Let's spin the reward wheel," I told him.

"Sure."

[The wheel is spinning.]

[The wheel has stopped spinning.]

[A rare-ranked item, Warrior's Horn, has been selected.]

"*Ugh*, it's a rare-ranked item…" Kim Tae-Geon exclaimed in disappointment.

"We still have two more chances, so don't be too disappointed, Tae-Geon," Lee Chul-Woo comforted him.

"Yeah, there's not much we can do about it. Do you want to spin the wheel for the next monster, Minji?" asked Kim Tae-Geon.

"Okay, oppa."

[The wheel is spinning.]

[The wheel has stopped spinning.]

[The low-grade epic-ranked named monster, Gatekeeper of Hell Karsak, has been selected.]

'Hm, not bad.'

"Prepare for battle," Lee Chul-Woo ordered.

Everyone nodded with determined faces.

It should be the same as earlier. Lee Chul-Woo would pour his buff on Kim Tae-Geon, and once Kim Tae-Geon entered the monster's aggro range, the battle would begin.

'It'll be better than earlier, right?'

I couldn't help but think that way. Earlier, they truly had no idea what to do, but now that I had told them what to do, they should start changing for the better. Unfortunately, I was mistaken.

"Swap! Swap!"

"Melee damage dealers shouldn't go in too deep!"

"Tae-Geon! Turn the monster around!"

"Why am I not getting any buffs?! Where are the buffs!"

'Shit. This is a mess.'

"Minji! Don't shoot arrows! Stop! Stop attacking! Stop attacking!"

It was mistaken. My suggestions had to have been too much for them to absorb in a short amount of time because their formation was a mess.

If they were to fight like earlier, then I was sure that they would be able to defeat the monster even if it would take a long time. Unfortunately, the current situation was grim, and the mess they had created would surely wipe them out.

The swap between the main tank and the sub-tank was awkward and strange.

I had told the melee damage dealers that they should be prepared to get hurt, but

they definitely misunderstood what I said because they went in too deep and attracted the monster's aggro away from the tanks.

In addition, it seemed that today was Gook Minji's first time using a crossbow because she sent an arrow flying into Karsak's left eye. The pain and the vision loss angered Karsak, which made it even more violent.

As for the ranged members, I honestly had no idea what they were doing.

Lee Chul-Woo was better than the others, but he was just providing buffs to the melee damage dealers without much thought. I couldn't even see Kim Tae-Geon anymore, but I was sure that he was having a hard time because the monster was on a rampage.

'What the hell are they doing?'

At this rate, there was a high chance that someone would die—no, I was a hundred percent sure that someone would die. In the end, I had no choice but to attack the monster in a similar way to what I had done earlier.

The Fire Giant appeared and pummeled Karsak until it died.

The dire situation finally came to an end.

The party members were desperately trying to catch their breaths. I was worried that they would start blaming me for their shameful performance. However, if they had even a tinge of conscience, I was sure that they wouldn't do that to me.

Unfortunately, they made a decision that was even worse than I had expected.

"Chul-Woo, I trusted you, but why were you not giving me enough buffs?" Kim Tae-Geon complained.

They decided to put the blame on others other than themselves.

As I stared at the scene, I suddenly felt like I could see cracks between the members of the Friendship Clan.

'This isn't it, you bastards! This isn't my intention! I'm not trying to break you guys up.'

CHAPTER 448
CRACKS IN THE FRIENDSHIP CLAN'S FRIENDSHIP (3)

“Chul-Woo, I trusted you, but why were you not giving me enough buffs?” Kim Tae-Geon complained.

His words weren’t a big deal, but all huge issues usually started small.

It was difficult to say that he was targeting Lee Chul-Woo. He just said it to express his disappointment. He also didn’t speak loudly, so he wasn’t really trying to put the blame on someone else or start being political about it.

However, it was obvious why he was suddenly expressing his disappointment.

‘He’s embarrassed.’

It was nothing more than him giving an excuse for his poor performance, and Kim Tae-Geon was actually blushing when he said that. Even I couldn’t help but feel ashamed when I recalled how he was struggling to fight the monster head-on.

Ordinary people might question why that was a problem, and the answer was the fact that epic-ranked players with the skills to match wouldn’t fight like what he had done at all.

He had performed worse than the newbie Park Deok-Gu a long time ago.

I was sure that he was *really* ashamed, and I was certain that he wanted to hide somewhere. When I saw how he was glancing at me, I became sure that he didn’t want to disappoint me.

‘And he’s doing that by saying that it wasn’t his fault. Men like him are the problem.’

Lee Chul-Woo was also stupfied. He had never expected that Kim Tae-Geon would put the blame on him.

“I’m sorry. We decided to invest the buffs more into melee swordswoman, and Miss Ki-Yeon also suggested that we do that…” Lee Chul-Woo replied.

Lee Chul-Woo looked at the swordswoman while saying that comment. He was apologizing, but the way he tried to avoid taking responsibility reminded me of a politician.

“Miss Eun-Hye also went in too deep. I found it difficult to keep the monster’s aggro on me,” Kim Tae-Geon added.

“I just did what… Ki-Yeon unni told me to do. I moved while putting my life on the line. I was prepared to get hurt. It makes me sad to hear you say that,” Eun-Hye said.

“You should have been more aware of your surroundings while doing that. You can’t just walk in and do your job recklessly,” Kim Tae-Geon retorted.

“No, the issue started when an arrow pierced Karsak’s eye. That’s where it all started,” said Eun-Hye as he decided to shift the blame as well.

‘It was all wrong the moment it started, guys… ’

However, a few people seemed to have agreed with Eun-Hye’s comment. If I had to pick a memorable scene, the attack that made the monster go on a rampage would be in my top three, and Gook Minji would likely emerge victorious.

The members started blaming each other for their lousy performance. As expected, Gook Minji knew how to escape the blame as well.

“The arrow landed during the swap, so there was nothing I could have done.”

In that case, Kim Tae-Geon and the sub-tank would most likely be blamed because it was undeniable that their swaps were awkward and weird. It wouldn’t be strange if one of them got called out for trolling based on the way they engaged the monster earlier.

The way they continued to point fingers at each other reminded me of the wheel of the Rift Museum because it seemed that someone would be randomly chosen as the scapegoat for the shameful performance earlier.

“You shouldn’t say that, Minji. *Ha*… do you know how difficult it is to swap without

any backup?" Kim Tae-Geon asked.

'This is where Mi-Jung joins the conversation.'

The way they continued blaming each other didn't fit the name of their clan, but this could still be fixed. Everyone was still indecisive and conservative.

I could understand it because when I first met them, they all seemed close to each other to the point that they wouldn't say anything that might hurt the others.

The answer was right there. Gook Minji and her party were basically trolling, but Lee Chul-Woo accepted their behavior with a smile.

Of course, he was still anxious.

Honestly, I was sure that the reason why they could raise their voices to blame each other was the great misunderstanding involving Light Ki-Yeon. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the incident helped them voice their opinions.

In the end, a small crack appeared in the relationship that was created based on deep trust. I could see it in the eyes of a few of the female members. They obviously resented Lee Chul-Woo as they stared at him with grim looks.

Gook Minji was only interested in Lee Chul-Woo, so she was still staring at him with warm eyes. However, it was clear that the others still wanted to complain. Unfortunately, they weren't the only ones who felt that way.

Lee Chul-Woo could definitely see the strange emotions in Kim Tae-Geon's eyes.

'This bastard is jealous.'

Kim Tae-Geon wasn't saying anything, but I could feel that he was jealous of Lee Chul-Woo. His gaze reminded me of Jung Ha-Yan's gaze while she was staring at Cha Hee-Ra. For a moment, I couldn't help but think why he was jealous of Lee Chul-Woo.

A few moments later, I finally remembered how the two of them were trying to get in my good books. Then, I also recalled how I acted cute in Lee Chul-Woo's arms earlier and how I was more sincere toward Lee Chul-Woo because he was the clan master.

'Did I tell him that he was doing a good job during the briefing?'

I couldn't remember it, but I could remember speaking in a way that wouldn't ruin the clan master's reputation among his members.

If I had treated him poorly in front of the clan members, then his authority would have gotten hurt. I couldn't help but think that it had to be the reason why Kim Tae-Geon got jealous of Lee Chul-Woo.

He was bothered that Lee Chul-Woo was coming off as someone more competent and skilled than him. Therefore, he had to have done everything he could as a vanguard, but his actions ended up ruining everything, which embarrassed him even more.

In situations like this, the members with support roles had the advantage because there was no way that they could mess up grandly to the extent of ruining the entire expedition.

Anyway, it wasn't an exaggeration to say that a man's jealousy was the root cause of the issue. As the voices of the clan members got louder, it became clear to me what I had to do. I had to stop them from fighting and make Kim Tae-Geon feel better.

"So why?! Why didn't you check whether the monster is on a rampage or not? This isn't your first time fighting a monster, right?" Kim Tae-Geon yelled.

"I already told you that I had to focus on someone else. I understand what you're saying, but I don't think it's entirely my fault," Lee Chul-Woo argued.

"Yeah, you have always been like that. You're never wrong," said Kim Tae-Geon.

This is where I come in.

"No, everyone did well. It's my first time here, and I feel like I made a difficult request… Every party hunts differently, and I feel like I said things without thinking. I think it'll be better if you hunt the way you used to."

'You incompetent fools. The future of the continent looks grim. What should we do?'

"It's fine, Miss Ki-Yeon. We agreed with the things you had mentioned, and I think it's right to say that we simply lack experience," Lee Chul-Woo said.

"That's not true. We managed to take care of the first monster without any issues, so

I think I caused confusion with my useless words. It's normal for a party to take more than a day or two before the members could work harmoniously with each other. And please don't be too stressed, Mr. Tae-Geon," I told him.

"…"

"We already know that you're a talented warrior. I can see how experienced you are with the way you fought the monster earlier and with the way you created space for the damage dealers," I continued.

'He's smiling. He's actually smiling so wide… You know you're only good at fighting and making space, right?'

"I'm ashamed of my poor… performance…" Kim Tae-Geon muttered.

"No, you did everything you could as the vanguard. It wasn't your fault, so please don't blame yourself…"

"The fact that you fought a rampaging named monster without buffs even for a moment is something other vanguards would find hard to do," I added and even smiled at him.

Kim Tae-Geon calmed down a bit.

"Miss Ki-Yeon is right. But I'm sure I would have done better if I had buffs," Kim Tae-Geon remarked.

'Why are you saying that, you crazy bastard?!'

Naturally, I glanced at Lee Chul-Woo and saw the latter's furrowed brows, which was unlike him. His face also turned red at the comment, so I was sure that Kim Tae-Geon's words had provoked him.

"I told you that I couldn't have done that, Tae-Geon," Lee Chul-Woo repeated.

"All I'm saying is that we were just unlucky, that's all. I was just saying it to myself, so don't worry about it, Chul-Woo," said Kim Tae-Geon.

"How can I not worry about it? And you know I have to manage my holy power, right? If you hadn't recklessly charged at the monster…" Lee Chul-Woo trailed off.

“What? Are you saying that the reason you ran out of holy power was that I tried my best to save the other party members by aggroing the monster?” Kim Tae-Geon questioned.

“*Ha*… that’s not what I meant,” Lee Chul-Woo replied.

“Yeah, right. That’s exactly what it sounded like,” Kim Tae-Geon said.

‘Stop it, you guys.’

At this point, Lee Chul-Woo would get called out for trolling. His best friend had betrayed him, and even Gook Minji started disliking him because he yelled at her earlier.

As expected, the other female members started commenting as well.

They weren’t outright dissing him, but it was true political warfare. Their attitudes changed so fast that I thought that Lee Chul-Woo should have long gotten used to their personalities. Unfortunately, it seemed that it was the opposite.

Even worse, the way they started attacking Lee Chul-Woo made them look like a group of wolves that were out to hunt the latter.

At this rate, it wouldn’t take long for Lee Chul-Woo to get called out as the troll.

‘I need to stop that.’

It didn’t really matter what would happen afterward, but I felt responsible because I felt like all this happened because of me—like I was the one who put them in this situation.

At the very least, I should spray some disinfectant on the wound.

“Everyone did well, and it’s no one’s fault, so please don’t be angry. I feel really bad now. I feel like I said something useless… Please calm down, everyone. This often happens among adventurers in an expedition, so please calm down,” I chimed in.

‘Yeah, it’s not really anyone’s fault. It’s everyone’s fault.’

“…”

“We should continue the expedition,” I suggested.

“Yes, let’s finish this,” Lee Chul-Woo said.

“Let’s do that.”

“Now that I think about it, we haven’t checked the rewards just yet.”

The party had cracked, but still…

‘There’s still room to turn this around.’

If an item above Epic came out, it would definitely improve the party’s atmosphere. The party members definitely thought the same because they started to compose themselves. It wasn’t really strange because no one would hate to receive rewards.

The members looked really excited as well.

“We should take the reward now,” Lee Chul-Woo said.

“Let’s proceed, oppas,” Gook Minji said.

“Yeah…”

“We got a rare-ranked item earlier, so it will be nice if we get an epic-ranked item this time. No, it has to be an epic-ranked item since the second monster we defeated earlier can’t be sold as a catalyst…” added Gook Minji.

“*Ugh*, I think the rates are very low…” Kim Tae-Geon muttered.

“We’ll know once we spin it. Let’s start,” said Gook Minji.

“I’ll spin it.”

“Goddess Benigoa, please…”

The six members closed their eyes and prayed.

The prayers of the players inside the museum would increase Benigoa’s holy power.

'I think it's pretty great.'

It wasn't my intention, but I thought that the museum would really help Benigoa and the other gods. Setting that aside, one of the female members finally spun the wheel after their short prayer.

[The wheel is spinning.]

'Let's goooo!'

"Purple! Purple!"

[The wheel is spinning.]

"Epic rank! Epic! Or a legendary!"

[The wheel is spinning.]

"Please! Please!"

[The wheel has stopped spinning.]

"Epic rank! Epic rank!"

"Please…"

'Let's go! In Benigoa's name!'

Ding!

[An average-ranked item, How the Alchemist and the Genius Swordsman Loves Manuscript Edition (Original Unedited Version - Subscription unavailable for those under 19 years old) has been selected.]

"…"

"*Huh?*"

"…"

Kim Tae-Geon hurled his shield away and cursed. “Shit!”

The expedition was over.

CHAPTER 449
OUR HYUN-SUNG (1)

The expedition could basically be considered over, but this didn't mean that we would be throwing away our last chance. Our mood had soured, but we couldn't let our last chance go to waste.

We were hoping that a Legendary-ranked item would appear for our last reward. Sadly, the last reward was a rare-ranked item. Overall, the expedition results were poor.

The expedition was basically a huge loss. They spent the majority of their funds on this expedition, but they ended up with two rare-ranked items and a manuscript edition of a book.

Obviously, the atmosphere turned grim. Of course, I didn't expect that this would happen. I would also have to figure out whether the Friendship Clan was just unlucky or if the Rift Museum was just that cruel.

Still, this was a huge reality check for the Friendship Clan.

'From a businessman's point of view, this is a huge profit… '

I couldn't look at the stragglers walking in defeat. Even if they put all their heads together to resolve this, it wouldn't be enough.

The trivial argument from earlier also created a cold war between them.

'The value of the Friendship Coin will plummet… '

I couldn't help but wonder if they still had enough funds and power to continue operating the Friendship Clan. Actually, I wasn't sure if they would be able to operate the clan properly.

The three female members wore strange looks, and it seemed like they had already made up their minds. They definitely remembered the saying about how one should

always cut their losses before it was too late.

They were definitely looking for the right time to leave the clan.

The innocent Lee Chul-Woo didn't seem like he was aware of their intentions, but it was pretty obvious. Even a blind person would be able to see that the Friendship Clan wouldn't last long.

'This clan is over.'

I was sure that the clan would completely dissolve in a week.

Actually, it could even fall apart right now.

"…"

"…"

'I should leave as soon as possible, too.'

I felt kind of responsible, but the thought disappeared when I shook my head. After all, I was sure that my job here was done.

There were small accidents and fights during the expedition, but I was sure that I had contributed at least seventy percent to the firepower we used to defeat those named monsters.

"*Um*… What are we going to do now, oppas?" Gook Minji asked.

"I'm not sure. Let's go back to our rooms and think about it. We have enough funds to stay here for a few more days. I think it would be better if we get rid of the items here. We can come back here after getting a loan or after we've found another way. We lost a lot of money, but… we can't just give up at this point," Lee Chul-Woo replied.

'Please don't take out a loan… '

"I think there's something fishy here. Why does a museum have a book like that in the first place…" Gook Minji questioned.

“You heard the manager, right? The museum contains items worthy of being collected all over the continent. It’s a bestselling novel, so they probably thought it was worthy of being distributed as part of the rewards…”

”Honestly, I don’t understand it either, but I’m sure it’ll be worth selling. I’m not sure how much money the collectors would pay for it, but we should sell it to whoever is willing to pay the highest price. Shit,” replied Lee Chul-Wo.

“It’s going to be difficult.” Gook Minji pointed out.

‘It’ll be difficult to put it up for auction.’

If there were people who wanted it desperately, then they could sell the manuscript at an exorbitant price, but that was just wishful thinking.

I was sure that the money they would earn from selling that book wouldn’t be enough to cover their losses, especially after the auction fee.

‘I’ll cover the auction fee.’

“I can do it,” I offered.

“What?”

“I have some connections with the auction house. If you leave it to me, I’ll sell it and give you the money. You should also write a contract regarding the distribution since the fees are for every transaction, and they are pretty expensive…”

”Anyway, I’m sure they’ll understand as long as I explain the situation,” I explained.

“No, it’s fine. I don’t think there’s a need to write a separate contract. If you have connections, I think that’s the best thing to do. By the way, Miss Ki-Yeon, what… are you planning on doing now?” Lee Chul-Woo asked.

‘What are you talking about? Of course, I’m going to do my own thing.’

It was time to leave the clan.

“I’m not sure…” I started.

“We should go and eat first. The expedition was a failure, but there are a few things that I would like to discuss with you,” Lee Chul-Woo added.

‘I really hope you’re not trying to recruit me, man. How could you think about having someone like me in your clan? Don’t you feel guilty about doing that?’

When I was about to decline, Gook Minji’s group spoke up first.

“Oppa, we also have something we’d like to tell you.”

“What is it?” Lee Chul-Woo asked.

“I’m really sorry to tell you this, but… this is the end for us,” one of the girls replied.

“What? What are you talking about?” he asked.

“We’ve actually been thinking about it for quite a while now, and I think this is the right time for us to tell you this…”

”We don’t have any other reason for leaving. It’s just that… we don’t exactly have a contract period, and I think this is a good time to go our separate ways,” she answered.

“Isn’t it too sudden?” Kim Tae-Geon asked.

Kim Tae-Geon was surprised. It couldn’t be helped because he was the sub clan master. He was trying his best to remain calm, but he was obviously struggling to do that. The clan was trying its best to survive, but three out of the six members suddenly decided to leave the clan. It would be strange if he could still remain calm.

Honestly, I couldn’t criticize those girls for making such a decision. The clan master and the sub clan master made mistake by neglecting them for a cunning fox, who would only be in their party temporarily.

Still, this was something that every clan had to experience, and the Friendship Clan was no exception.

“You don’t need to pay us since you guys are in a difficult position financially. However, we’ll take one of the rare-ranked items. That’s okay, right?” she asked.

“That’s fine with me, but I mean, hold on. How about we talk it out? Leaving just like this won’t be good for you guys, either. How about we decide on a proper plan of action and think about it?” asked Lee Chul-Woo.

“It’s fine. I understand how you guys feel, but I don’t think we fit well with the Friendship Clan, and I became sure of it in today’s hunt. The overall atmosphere of the clan has also changed. Anyway, all I can say is that I’m really sorry,” she answered.

“Unnis, please don’t do this. It’s so sudden…” Gook Minji begged.

“Minji, think about it. Do you really deserve to stay in this clan? Anyway, we’ll be heading out first. If we ever meet again, let’s at least greet each other, oppas. We’re also willing to go hunting with you from time to time. Stay in touch, Minji, and we’ll also contact you, Ki-Yeon unni,” they said.

The girls quickly and coldly abandoned the clan. Before anyone could say anything, the former members of the Friendship Clan heaved sighs of relief. I felt awkward because I had to drive a stake into the heart of the Friendship Clan as well.

Kim Tae-Geon and Lee Chul-Woo looked as if they had lost everything. Unfortunately, Light Ki-Yeon wasn’t nice enough to consider their situation. I had to cut them off fast, and my pride was actually hurt because those rookies had beaten me to the chase.

“I’m sorry, but I also have my own business to handle,” I told them.

“Excuse me?” Lee Chul-Woo asked.

“The… expedition was fun, Mr. Chul-Woo, Mr. Tae-Geon. We had a bit of a misunderstanding, but it was still fun, Miss Minji,” I said.

“Why…”

“I don’t think I can fit in with this clan, and I don’t really like the idea of being affiliated with a group, so I’m sorry…” I added.

“Miss Ki-Yeon, let’s discuss this,” Lee Chul-Woo suggested.

‘Please don’t get clingy, man… ’

“No, thank you,” I told him.

“Miss Ki-Yeon, please don’t…”

‘What the hell, man? We had nothing going on, so stop questioning me.’

“Miss Ki-Yeon, I’d like to formally apologize if you found the expedition uncomfortable. Please think about it again,” Lee Chul-Woo requested.

“…”

“Please consider it again for my sake,” he added.

‘What does that have to do with me, Chul-Woo?’

“I didn’t want to tell you like this, but I’d like you to join the next expedition and grow the clan with us. I understand that we’re lacking a lot, but please think of it in a positive way,” Lee Chul-Woo continued.

“It’s kind of unfortunate. I want to be with you guys as well, but… I really do have other plans,” I told him.

“How about we return to the inn and eat first? We received a lot of help from you, and I’d like to thank you for it,” Lee Chul-Woo suggested.

I was sure that the moment I did that, there was no way I would be able to leave them by then. They would definitely do their best to make me stay.

If the Friendship Clan managed to recruit Light Ki-Yeon, in addition to making up for their losses, they would profit greatly as well. They had already witnessed my might, so I could understand why Lee Chul-Woo was doing this.

“Y-Yeah, unni… let’s go together. I’m sorry.”

Even Gook Minji started saying strange things.

I started coughing because they were like thieves trying to recruit a talented woman for free, even though she belonged to a large guild.

“Miss Ki-Yeon,” Lee Chul-Woo called out.

'Stop it, man.'

He even grabbed my hand, and he looked really serious as he stared at me.

"Did… I do something wrong?" he asked.

"No, it's nothing like that," I replied.

"I-I'm not sure if it's just me, but in the d-dungeon, I thought you and I shared the same feelings…" he commented.

'What kind of feelings?'

Men like him were a dime a dozen out there. I treated him nicely just once, but he misunderstood that I was expressing my feelings for him.

The ignorant man was blushing, but his actions and words wouldn't be enough to shake Light Ki-Yeon's impregnable heart. Actually, my mood soured because of what he was trying to do, and I felt a shiver down my spine when I saw how serious he looked.

"I don't understand what you're saying, Mr. Chul-Woo. I don't like this. Could you let go of me, please?" I requested.

"Miss Ki-Yeon," he called out again.

"Let go of her hand, Chul-Woo," said Kim Tae-Geon.

The large-framed man even joined the fray. We were in the middle of the city, so the sudden war about love attracted a lot of attention.

Kim Tae-Geon stood between Lee Chul-Woo and me, and the way he grabbed my hand as if he were a knight in shining armor saving a princess in distress made the entire situation look embarrassing for Lee Chul-Woo.

I was also starting to get nervous about the attention we were getting.

"Could you two let go of me, please?" I asked.

"Miss Ki-Yeon, please think about it again… I'd like to speak to you privately," Lee

Chul-Woo requested.

I was about to take a more drastic measure when I heard a familiar voice.

“Please let her go.”

I looked toward where the voice had come from and saw a face more handsome than these two uglies.

There was a sword at his waist, and even though he was clad in simple armor, the badge on his chest told us the rank of the figure who suddenly appeared. I felt bad for comparing his appearance to these two uglies because I had basically insulted him.

‘What’s with him? Why does he look so handsome?’

The owner of the voice was Kim Hyun-Sung, the Guild Master of the Blue Guild and our lovely regressor.

“This is the last time I’m going to say it—let her go,” Kim Hyun-Sung warned.

CHAPTER 450
OUR HYUN-SUNG (2)

"The Guild Master of the Blue Guild?"

"*Uh*…"

The two stood there with their mouths open, and even though they didn't say anything, they looked as if they were asking what Kim Hyun-Sung was doing here. I wanted to ask the same question.

I could have never imagined that he would walk around the city by himself.

'Damn. He's such a righteous guy.'

It was highly likely that he couldn't stand the sight of two men forcing a lone woman to go with them.

"Hello, Guild Master of the Blue Guild. I think there's a misunderstanding here. We're the Friendship Clan from Lindel and—"

"She doesn't like what you're doing. I don't know what's going on, but I suggest you stop here," Kim Hyun-Sung interrupted.

"Miss Ki-Yeon, please say something…" Lee Chul-Woo asked.

He was asking me for help, but I had already cut off all ties with the Friendship Clan.

When my hands were finally free, I quickly moved over next to Kim Hyun-Sung.

I felt like trash, but I was done with the Friendship Clan

"Thank you for the help, Guild Master of the Blue Guild," I said.

My attitude changed quickly as well.

“Miss Ki-Yeon!” Lee Chul-Woo called out.

“The expedition was fun, but this is the end, Mr. Chul-Woo. Please consider how rude your action was just now. As soon as I take care of the items we had obtained, I’ll send you the money immediately. I think it’s best if we contact each other after we have calmed down a bit,” I suggested.

“That’s…”

“The next time we meet, I hope we’ll meet with a smile,” I added.

As soon as I finished talking, they revealed gloomy looks. I felt kind of bad for Lee Chul-Woo, who looked as if he was about to cry, but my business with them was already finished. I was done checking everything I had to check, and I had already figured out the overall level of the current adventurers and their lifestyles.

It was a cold-hearted move on my side. Lee Chul-Woo was staring at me, but he quietly bowed upon noticing that Kim Hyun-Sung was looking at him.

“…I’m sorry, Miss Ki-Yeon. I wasn’t trying to hurt you… I think it’s best if we meet again after we have calmed down, as you suggested. I really enjoyed the expedition, and I really hope we can see each other again. I’ll wait at the inn we stayed at yesterday, so you can send the auction money there. Well then…” he requested.

“Take care. I won’t see you out,” I told him.

He looked as if he had lost everything, and Kim Tae-Geon also bowed toward me without saying anything before following Lee Chul-Woo. Gook Minji reacted the same way.

The fun was officially over.

I glanced at Kim Hyun-Sung, but he wasn’t looking at me.

‘He hasn’t noticed yet?’

I could have directly revealed my identity by removing my disguise somewhere and running back to him. However, this wasn’t so bad either. I was curious about his thoughts, after all. I wanted to know what he had been doing as well.

I considered the possibility of him finding out my identity in the middle of it, but…

'He's dense and slow on the uptake.'

I was sure that he wouldn't figure it out unless I gave him hints. He wasn't like Park Deok-Gu at all.

'I think if Deok-Gu were the regressor, he would have stopped the threat or whatever the world was about to face in just three years.'

Of course, I was just joking, but the fact that I even thought about it spoke wonders.

Anyway, Kim Hyun-Sung was staring at me indifferently. He nodded once and continued walking.

'He's leaving just like that?'

I felt desperate.

"Guild master of the Blue Guild!' I yelled.

Thankfully, he turned around.

"Yes?" Kim Hyun-Sung replied.

"Thank you. I was actually in a complicated situation just now," I said.

"I just did what was right. Goodbye," he said.

"Wait!' I yelled again.

"Yes?"

"I'd like to buy you tea to express my gratitude. Do you have time?" I asked.

"You don't need to do that," he replied.

'You slow-witted dumbass!'

I could finally understand why the women around him seemed frustrated every day.

He was actually even worse than slow-witted. I was sure that Park Yeon-Joo, Jo Hye-Jin, Charlotte, and Kim Ye-Ri would be tormented by him forever.

I could finally understand how much they had been struggling since forever. I was sure that even if they gave Kim Hyun-Sung a massive hint about their feelings, he would still not notice it.

I had no other excuse to stop him. My smile was about to disappear, but I noticed Kim Hyun-Sung inspecting me.

'What's with him?'

"You guys look alike," he commented.

"Excuse me?" I asked. My heart sank, but I exclaimed in joy inwardly when I heard his following words.

"It's nothing. This must be fate, so how about we have a cup—no, how about we get something to eat?" he suggested.

'I almost had a heart attack thinking that he recognized me. I guess it's not that hard for him to notice that we look alike?'

I could consider myself lucky. The fact that he recognized my uncanny resemblance to Light Ki-Young meant that he was fond of Light Ki-Young.

Kim Hyun-Sung taking the initiative to offer dinner was rare. He was actually wary of eating with other people. It had been a long time since we arrived on this continent, so he had gotten a bit more relaxed lately.

However, when we first met, he wasn't like this at all.

He didn't even want to sit with other people, so I couldn't help but feel happy to see his development. There were probably many reasons behind his change, but the truth was that he had become a bit more accommodating to others.

If he was making that offer simply because I resembled Light Ki-Young, then it meant that he was still *really* fond of me.

With that being said, I decided to shove my worries to the back of my mind as I

replied, “Sure, let’s do that. It’s my honor to dine with the Guild Master of the Blue Guild.”

“…”

Kim Hyun-Sung blushed at that. For some reason, I wanted to tease him even more.

“Are you asking me out on a date?” I asked.

“N-No, it’s nothing like that. It’s just…” He stammered. It was kind of amusing because he wasn’t really the type of person to panic. Of course, his panic only lasted briefly.

After collecting his breath, he looked at me quietly and said, “I’m usually not like this, and I’m not really the type to invite others to eat with me or ask them for their time, but…”

“Yes?”

“I wanted to do it today,” he added.

‘Hyun-Sung, you’re such a playboy… ’

His words weren’t anything special, but he was so handsome that I became sure that any words from his mouth were capable of shaking the heart of any woman out there. If someone else were here rather than me, then they would certainly join Kim Hyun-Sung’s harem.

“What a coincidence. I feel the same,” I told him.

“That really is a coincidence. Let’s get going,” he suggested.

“Are you… out here by yourself?” I asked.

“That’s right,” he replied.

“What about the other guild members…” I asked.

“I’m sure they’re still working out there. I came out because it has been a while since I got some fresh air, but I ended up here,” he replied.

“You must be frustrated,” I commented.

“Excuse me?”

“People usually go out for fresh air when they feel frustrated while working. That’s all I was saying, but looking at your face, it seems like there’s actually something bothering you. Did I hit the mark? *Hehe*,” I giggled.

“There’s… something that has been bothering me a bit. Anyway, you sound like you’re skilled at reading faces.” he pointed out.

“That’s not the case, but you seem like the type who wears his heart on his sleeves…” I said.

“Really?” he asked.

“Yup. You look indifferent, but I can tell the slight difference somehow,” I replied.

“I have never heard of that before,” he said.

“Really? That’s kind of surprising. I feel like you should have been hearing that often from the people around you…” I told him.

“*Haha*,” Kim Hyun-Sung laughed awkwardly.

I could remember that his walking speed was faster than this, so when I saw how he was watching my walking speed, I couldn’t help but be convinced that he wasn’t as dense and slow-witted as I thought.

I was sure that the women who liked him liked this side of him a lot.

‘Shit, Hyun-Sung. You’re so cool. Don’t go overboard, man. You’re going to make me fall for you.’

I liked the fact that our conversation was going smoother than I had expected. He was trying his best in our conversation, even though his oratory stat was rare-ranked. The way he reacted and smiled at me whenever I said something made things a lot easier for me.

The *blind date* happened all of a sudden, but I didn’t feel out of place or

uncomfortable. It felt like I was talking to him as usual, so I was able to talk to him about different topics, and I was sure that it was the same for him.

Our conversation kept going even after we had entered a restaurant.

The way he pulled out the chair for me was really unlike him.

“Have a seat,” Kim Hyun-Sung said.

“This is kind of embarrassing… You must be used to being with women,” I said.

“Not really. I’m not used to being around women at all,” he said.

“You don’t have to hide it. It’d be strange if there aren’t any women around the Guild Master of the Blue Guild. Otherwise, could I interpret your actions just now as you trying to impress me?” I asked.

“*…”* Kim Hyun-Sung didn’t know what to say.

“I’m joking. I know you’re not that type of person,” I told him.

“What do you mean?” he asked.

“You’re famous. I can already tell just by your achievements in Lindel. *Ah!* Can I order wine?” I asked.

“Of course. I’m the one who invited you, after all,” he replied.

“Then, I’ll order whatever I want,” I said.

“Sure.”

I had been wanting to eat something expensive because the only *tasty* food I had eaten so far was sausage from that restaurant-cum-pub.

‘The atmosphere feels nice.’

From now on, I had to be careful about our conversation. I had to carefully take the lead because I wanted to know what he thought of me.

The atmosphere was nice, but there was no way that would be enough for him to talk about what had been bothering him recently or why he was acting strange lately.

Our lovely regressor wasn't that talkative, so there was no way he would tell his problems to a woman he had just met.

Actually, it was rare for him to talk about his own issues. Therefore, there was a huge chance that he would draw a line in the type of topics we could talk about with each other.

'Should I just seduce him?'

That was out of the question…

Kim Hyun-Sung had a harem, so there was a low chance that he would respond positively to a seduction.

It might be better if I kept my distance from him. After all, there were times when people would talk about their worries to strangers rather than to people they were close to for some reason. He liked me as well, so it could work.

I could tell him my worries first, then I would urge him to tell me his worries.

This was the best method…

I wanted to get straight to the point, but it would only make him wary of me. The first step of the plan was to enjoy the atmosphere, and the next step would be to poke around.

"Did you just come out from the museum?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

"Yes. It was a *really* nice place. I liked the fact that they offer Adventurer insurance since the worst-case scenario could be averted. Of course, they're aware that the museum is dangerous, but with insurance, they wouldn't be that worried about going into battle," I replied.

We started off by talking about a topic familiar to us both.

"I've actually seen you from afar before. Back then, I thought you were handsome. Up close, I can see that you're very attractive. You hear that often, right?" I asked.

“I don’t. Just once in a while,” he replied.

“*Hehe*,” I giggled.

I didn’t forget to make a few jokes and tease him.

We ended up talking for hours on end. I was worried that he was getting bored, but it didn’t seem to be the case. His face looked a bit flushed, so I couldn’t help but think that he was getting drunk.

The distance between our chairs started to get closer and closer as he slowly put his guard down.

The problem was…

‘Aren’t we sitting a bit too close now? Shit.’

The atmosphere had become so good to point that I had to think about *slightly* widening the distance between us.

CHAPTER 451
OUR HYUN-SUNG (3)

'Let's adjust our distance from each other... '

I didn't want us to get closer because Lee Ki-Yeon wasn't in a position to become even closer to Kim Hyun-Sung. It was actually the opposite. I was thinking about a one-night stand, and that was the only type of relationship we could possibly have.

All this had to remain a coincidence—our meeting and conversation—they had to remain a coincidence, nothing more, nothing less. That way, we could part ways without any regrets.

If we were to become too close, then I would have to keep in touch with him.

I leaned back slowly, and I was relieved that Kim Hyun-Sung didn't realize that I was trying to keep my distance away from him. He had to have thought that I was simply changing my sitting posture.

I knew that he wasn't really the type of person to react to this kind of behavior, but since all this was important to me, I had no choice but to be cautious.

'In some ways, I feel relieved.'

Our conversation continued, and from light-hearted conversations, we started having personal conversations. However, what surprised me a bit was that Kim Hyun-Sung was slowly revealing information about himself.

Honestly, they weren't exactly detailed information because the things he was saying were information everyone knew, but the fact that he was willing to speak about himself was the most important part here.

"I see. I can tell that you're different. Being the guild master of a guild representing Lindel must be difficult," I commented.

"It is. There are a lot of political conversations, and I can't just do whatever I want. I

have to think about the Vatican and consider the nearby cities as well. I'm speaking as if I know a lot, but I'm actually not that experienced in this…" Kim Hyun-Sung confessed.

"But the Blue Guild is doing fine, you know? It's powerful and influential…" I pointed out.

"It's probably because of my best friend," he said.

The lovely regressor eventually mentioned me.

"Best friend? *Ah*, the honorary cardinal," I said.

"Yes…"

'Wow, Hyun-Sung called me his best friend… You're going to make me cry. Hyun-Sung, you're my best friend, too.'

"You guys must be close like the rumors said," I commented.

"Who knows? That's how I feel, at least. It hasn't been that long since we've known each other. It's kind of strange, but sometimes, I feel like this is what it should feel like if I had a brother. I didn't think that way at first, but… he has a strange charm," he explained.

'Hyun-Sung, I know how you feel. I feel the same.'

"I'm sure the honorary cardinal feels the same. I don't know you two that well, but I did hear many things about you guys," I told him.

"What are those things?" he asked.

"*Hehe*. Everyone already knows how loyal the honorary cardinal is to you, even though the word loyalty doesn't really fit him…" I replied.

"*Haha*. You're right. It doesn't fit him. It's actually kind of embarrassing. Loyalty…" he muttered.

"Friendship will probably make you feel less embarrassed. Yeah, friendship. I'm kind of jealous," I commented.

“Excuse me?” he asked.

“The fact that you can form relationships in a place like this,” I answered.

“*Ah*…”

“Finding people you can trust isn’t easy. You can get backstabbed easily here… trusting people is… difficult,” I added.

“I understand,” he said.

“…”

I wasn’t really sure, but I thought that it was about time for us to move on to the next stage because Kim Hyun-Sung was already drunk, and the atmosphere was great. If I were to drag this on any longer, he could end up losing interest, so I had to make up my mind.

I made sure that my emotions were under my control before speaking, “To be honest…”

“Yes?” Kim Hyun-Sung looked at me.

“I have someone like that, too. Someone like the honorary cardinal to you. Someone I considered as my sister,” I continued.

“You mean…”

“Yeah, she’s gone. There was an accident, and she died. It was my fault,” I replied.

“What?” Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

“It's something that happens often. I didn’t trust her,” I confessed.

“*Ah*…”

“She trusted me, but I didn’t trust her,” I added.

“…”

“I’m not sure why I’m telling you this. I mean, we met for the first time today,” I said.

I didn’t pull a dirty move by crying. I decided to do my best to hold my tears back while telling him my story. I glanced at Kim Hyun-Sung, and he looked really shocked.

He definitely didn’t expect that the atmosphere would become dramatic all of a sudden.

However, I noticed that he wanted to comfort me sincerely, and I was sure that he wanted to do it because he had also experienced losing comrades before.

“I don’t know what to say,” he said.

“I shouldn’t have said anything. A crying woman isn’t very charming…” I told him.

“No, that’s not true. Actually, you are…” he paused.

“You have an interesting taste,” I remarked.

“*Ahem*, I really can’t beat you,” he said.

“I’m sorry. Your reaction was cute, so I unknowingly—Anyway, that’s what happened. It’s nothing special, and it happens often here. It has been a long time, and I have already moved on—somewhat. You don’t have to comfort me with that look on your face, Mr. Hyun-Sung,” I told him.

“Okay…”

“Shall we have another drink?” I suggested.

“I know I said this, but I’m really sorry,” he repeated.

“Are you going to keep acting depressed like that? Let’s toast. Cheers. *Ugh*… this wine is strong,” I commented.

Kim Hyun-Sung smiled and drank the wine, but his smile looked weird.

He looked as if he was having other thoughts.

'Did it work?'

His face was telling me yes. However, I was still worried because I got into it all of a sudden, and I was sure that he didn't expect me to be so straightforward. I was kind of happy, but I felt kind of bitter as well.

The fact that my story worked on Kim Hyun-Sung meant that he was somewhat suspicious of Lee Ki-Young.

'Shit, Hyun-Sung. I'm really heartbroken. What did I do? Why are you still suspicious of me? I'm not like that masked scum. I have nothing to hide.'

Of course, I wouldn't really say that I hadn't done anything wrong because problematic issues had to be inevitably tackled to protect the continent.

Even if Kim Hyun-Sung had been trying his best to turn a blind eye, I was sure that there were things that he couldn't just ignore. In that sense, it was only natural for him to be suspicious.

He had said that I was like a brother to him, and brothers often grew closer by fighting against each other.

I was done with my story, so it was time for Kim Hyun-Sung to tell me his story. Of course, I had to be cautious about it.

"You have that expression again."

"What?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

"That frustrated look. Do you want to get some air?" I asked.

"You really are talented at reading people's faces," he commented.

"I told you that you wear your heart on your sleeves. I feel like I had said something I shouldn't have…" I replied.

"No, it's nothing like that. I was just thinking about something. It's about trust," he said.

"Are you talking about the honorary cardinal?" I asked.

Kim Hyun-Sung smiled bitterly, but I was sure that it was something positive.

“Is something wrong?” I questioned.

“No, he isn’t the problem. It’s actually me,” he answered.

“What?”

“The issue is with my own heart,” he replied.

“I see. Rather than frustrated, it’s more like you’re ashamed,” I commented.

“Yes. That’s a better word to describe it. Shame,” he agreed.

“If you don’t mind, can you tell me your story?” I requested.

“…”

“I’m not sure if I can be helpful, but…” I trailed off.

‘Ha… Is he going to back out?’

I was about to feel disappointed, but Kim Hyun-Sung finally spoke, “I can’t stop being suspicious.”

“Excuse me?” I asked.

“It’s exactly like I said, I can’t stop being suspicious. The others aren’t the problem here. It’s me. It’s really… a personal issue. Yes, a personal issue,” he repeated.

“*Ah*…”

“The fact that I can’t trust him as much as he trusts me breaks my heart. I know that it’s not true. What my mind is saying to me isn’t true, but I keep on having those intrusive thoughts. In the end, I can’t even look at him properly.”

“I don’t know how or when all this started, but I feel like there’s something wrong with my heart. Why am I feeling like this?” Kim Hyun-Sung continued.

‘You dummy. Hyun-Sung… why are you so nice?’

I was nervous but happy at the same time because I finally had an idea of what he was going through. I wasn't sure how it happened, but Kim Hyun-Sung was definitely suspicious of me.

However, the issue was that he was blaming himself for that.

I was sure that the reason he couldn't look people directly in their eyes was that he had gotten backstabbed too many times in his previous life. He looked like he was in a lot of pain. He called me his brother, but he was avoiding me.

'I understand. It can't be helped because he had already gotten backstabbed, after all… I completely understand, Hyun-Sung.'

I could still remember how he displayed signs of severe PTSD during the war with the Republic. I was sure that this was the continuation of those events. To be honest, the fault didn't only lie on Kim Hyun-Sung.

The suspicious incidents had to have made him suspicious of me, but rather than solving the puzzle by connecting those pieces, he stored them in his head and hid them in the deepest recesses of his mind.

I was happy that he had been doing that. After all, it seemed that there was no need for me to do anything because he had been actively avoiding being suspicious of me.

'Mr. Ki-Young isn't that kind of person. I shouldn't be suspicious of him.'

I was sure he was actively avoiding being suspicious of me by using those words to convince himself. He was taking it seriously. I was innocent, but the demon in his heart was yelling at him, saying that he should be suspicious of me.

"Every time I notice that I'm having those thoughts, I would always feel like my heart is breaking…" Kim Hyun-Sung confessed.

"That's not true," I told him.

"…"

"I'm not sure what kind of situation you're in, but if you ask me, the heart of the Blue Guild's Guild Master is complete. I'm not saying this to comfort you. It has only been a few hours since we started talking, but that is how I feel. You're a great person, Mr.

Hyun-Sung," I explained.

"…"

"I'm definitely right," I added.

"I must be drunk now because I usually don't talk about things like this," he commented.

"It's because I brought it up first. I'm not sure if this is going to be helpful, but… as your senior who experienced something similar…" I paused.

"Yes?"

"I think it'll be good if you talk to him often," I continued.

"*Ah*…"

"Be honest and tell him everything that's weighing on your mind. I'm sure it'll help, and it's not good to keep pushing it back as well. You said he was like a brother to you, right?" I reminded.

"I did…"

"If the honorary cardinal thinks the same way, then I'm sure he'll understand you, Mr. Hyun-Sung," I added.

"*Ah*…"

'That's right. Let's talk about the things weighing on our minds.'

Kim Hyun-Sung nodded without saying anything.

"Shall we have another drink?" I asked.

"Sure."

'It actually went smoothly… '

My heart felt like it was breaking upon realizing that I was basically backstabbing

him by doing this. Unfortunately, it had to be done. It was the only way that could get rid of the demon in the lovely regressor's mind and heart.

I started to feel better because everything went better than expected. I told myself to be careful earlier, but I ended up drinking a bit too much because it had been a while since I drank with him.

I was starting to feel a bit tipsy, and I definitely looked drunk in Kim Hyun-Sung's eyes because he looked worried about me.

"I think you're already drunk," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"I'm fine. *Hehe*," I giggled.

"We should get going. I'll take you back to your place," he offered.

"I told you I'm fine. I'm not that weak, so you don't have to worry about me. Let's drink a bit more," I suggested.

"No. I have to take you back to your home, or I won't feel at ease," he declined.

'Don't take me back to my home, man.'

The air between us was starting to get strange.

CHAPTER 452
OUR HYUN-SUNG (4)

"No. I have to take you back to your home, or I won't feel at ease," Kim Hyun-Sung declined.

'Shit.'

I glanced at him and saw not a single hint of indecent thoughts on his handsome face. I was getting worried that he had other ideas, but I didn't really have to worry because he was a gentleman who had been acknowledged by a unicorn.

I was sure that he was simply worried that I might fall into danger on my way back home. I considered if it would be fine for me to accept his offer, but in my eyes, it would be best if we were to end things here.

'I mean, at the end of the day, he's still a man.'

It wouldn't be strange if something happened between us. I had just realized it, but all of this was strange. A man and a woman with a strange bond toward each other met coincidentally and got drunk together. A normal man and a normal woman would have immediately headed for the Rift Inn, but we had no plans on doing *that.*

For me, the most pressing issue here was…

'How long do I have until the effect wears off?'

The spell that the fairy had cast on me was slowly wearing off, and it was a huge problem. The duration of the fairy's spell was only three days, and today happened to be the third day, so I had to be really careful.

It wouldn't have mattered if I had been Lee Ki-Young when I met Kim Hyun-Sung earlier, but the problem was that I created a story about having a dead sister and lied to him. If he were to catch me reverting back to Lee Ki-Young, he would only be more doubtful.

'I'm sure it's going to last a bit longer... '

Light Ki-Young's magic resistance was low, so it should last a bit longer. However, I couldn't guarantee it, so I had to leave as soon as possible.

"I told you, I'm really okay," I said.

I had to come back to my senses. My thoughts were smooth, but my speech was slurred, so I definitely looked like a drunk woman.

Kim Hyun-Sung still looked worried. I looked to the side and saw empty liquor bottles.

The atmosphere was nice, and the alcohol was delicious today, but I had no idea that we had already drunk so many bottles of liquor.

Of course, I immediately realized that it would actually be strange if I wasn't drunk. I had just returned from an expedition. It wasn't a tough one, but I still worked hard for three days straight, so I was physically exhausted.

I was tired, but instead of resting, I went straight to drinking, so it was only natural that I felt like passing out right now. Kim Hyun-Sung was dense and slow-witted, but he could see that I was drunk, so it was only natural for him to get worried.

I pushed my bag further into my robe and looked at him.

"I think we should head out. Where are you staying for the night?" he asked.

"I-I haven't found a place yet because I met you before I found a place. I think the Rift Inn has a lot of rooms, so I can just go there," I replied.

"In that case…" he paused.

"Yes?"

"How about coming to a branch office of the Blue Guild? I'm not sure if you'll like it, but I'm sure it'll be better than the rooms at the Rift Inn," he offered.

'Stop being nice for no reason, man.'

“No, that’s a bit… I already caused you a lot of trouble, and I don’t want to burden you even more. You even bought me delicious food, so I’m a bit embarrassed to rely on you more, Mr. Hyun-Sung,” I declined.

“It’s fine,” he said.

“I feel bad…” I commented.

“It’s really okay,” he insisted.

“I’m okay as well,” I said.

‘Why is he so determined?’

I suddenly became filled with anxiety. I wanted to run away, but I couldn’t. Wait…

‘He probably won’t just stand by even if I insisted on refusing his offer.’

I was sure that he would check on me because he was just that kind of person. It might actually be better if I just told him to accompany me, and even though it could be dangerous, this was one of the better choices.

I stood up. I thought I would instantly fall back down because my surroundings were spinning, but I managed to maintain my balance by holding on to our table.

Kim Hyun-Sung flinched at the sight.

“You’re really drunk.” Kim Hyun-Sung pointed out.

“Then… please take me to the nearest inn,” I requested.

‘Don’t smile like that, Hyun-Sung. I might fall for you.’

“Okay.”

It was already dark outside the restaurant, and the stars in the sky caused me to sigh. I was kind of surprised because this background was enough to create a certain *mood*, but I continued walking without saying anything.

“There are a lot of stars today,” Kim Hyun-Sung commented.

“You’re right. *Ha*…” I sighed.

“Are you alright?” he asked.

“I’m a bit dizzy, but I’m fine. I’m sorry about this. I feel like I’m causing you trouble,” I apologized.

“You really don’t have to worry. You helped me get rid of my frustration, so think of this as me repaying you that debt,” he replied.

“I didn’t do anything. If you had asked anyone else around you, I’m sure they would’ve told you the same thing. I’m a bit embarrassed to hear you praise me when I didn’t really do much,” I said.

“…”

I maintained a slightly cold expression. I had no idea if it were because of the orange street lights, but Kim Hyun-Sung looked like he was blushing.

‘I’m having a hard time walking… I overdid it. Shit… Ki-Yeon, why did you do that? Why did you have fun without thinking about the possible consequences?’

It had been a while since I drank with my little brother, so I ended up drinking a lot without thinking of the consequences. I was having a hard time walking, so I felt relieved that I had accepted his offer.

I was walking as fast as I could, but I felt like I wasn’t moving at all.

I started staggering as well.

Rift Land’s security was great, but it still wouldn’t be a good idea for a woman to walk alone at night because Rift Land was filled with powerful players who could kill large monsters in a single blow.

When I recalled how people often get into trouble while walking alone, I was even more convinced that I would have gotten into trouble if I were alone here.

I finally understood Kim Hyun-Sung’s thoughts and why he insisted on staying by my side. Actually, he still looked worried even as we were walking slowly together while talking to each other.

Kim Hyun-Sung looked like he couldn't decide whether he should lend me his shoulder or carry me on his back. He also seemed like he was worried that I wouldn't like it if he touched my hand.

'He's really a dummy.'

I knew he was maintaining his distance to prevent unintentional physical contact, but this was a bit much. If I were actually a woman, I would have actually been frustrated by his kindness.

'Have some confidence, man! Grab her hand! Put your arms around her! Just do it, but do it quietly! Do it, man!'

Of course, I wasn't really expecting to be in that kind of situation.

I was relieved that he was doing his best to avoid unnecessary physical contact, but I couldn't help but start thinking that he was pitiful.

He looked prepared to catch me in case I fainted, but his awkward movements made him look like he had no dating experience rather than making him look like he had good manners.

Kim Hyun-Sung's actions slowed us down, and it felt like it was going to take forever to reach the Rift Inn.

All of a sudden, I felt strange.

'Why is it so hot?'

I had no idea why, but my body was getting hot. I was already exhausted, so the heat was making me feel even more exhausted. The sudden onset of this abnormal condition surprised me, and I broke out into a cold sweat as well.

'The spell…!'

There was a chance that the disguise spell was wearing off—no, I was sure that I was about to revert to my original body. It was evidenced by how I could feel mana burning within me.

I felt like everything would fall apart the moment I put my guard down.

My breathing started to get rough and uneven. I was walking confidently, but I couldn't hide my condition. The Rift Inn was still a bit distant from here, and Kim Hyun-Sung looked like he was protecting me.

Kim Hyun-Sung noticed my heavy breathing, and he looked at me worriedly.

However, I wasn't really happy to see that he was worried about me.

"*Ha*…"

"Are you okay?" Kim Hyun-Sung asked.

I didn't have the energy to reply. I was focused on suppressing the burning mana that was trying to leave my body. I was getting worried because if the spell ended while he was around, it would be the end.

Of course, Kim Hyun-Sung had no idea what was going on, so I couldn't really blame him for being worried about me.

'Hurry up and leave, Hyun-Sung.'

"I think I'll be fine. From here—*ah*! I can go to the inn on my own," I told him.

"What? But—"

"We're already out of the dark alleyway, and we're on the main road now." I pointed out.

I sounded like I had to go to the bathroom.

"We're close, so I'll escort you the rest of the way. We're on the main road, but it's still dangerous here at night," he said.

"I'm really fine. I'm really…"

'It's not going to work. He's not going to listen.'

He was determined to accompany me. I nervously gulped a mouthful of my own saliva because he wasn't listening to me at all. The mana that was trying its best to break free was incredibly hard to contain.

I had to talk, walk, and contain the mana. The exertion was making me feel dizzy, and it felt like it would only get difficult from here.

Similar to a hole in a bottle of water, the mana would definitely flow out if I were to stop blocking it.

'Kim Hyun-Sung… you little… '

A bad idea suddenly popped into my mind. It was a bad idea, but it might drive him away—no, based on his personality, he would definitely be driven away. Dozens of ideas popped into my mind, but before I could organize my thoughts, my lips moved.

"I can go there by myself, Mr. Hyun-Sung. Really. I understand that you're worried, but I feel really uncomfortable."

"But—"

"I already said this much, so I think I already made it clear to you. Please go back," I interrupted him.

"I'll go with you just a bit further," he insisted.

"No, I'll be fine," I declined.

I tried to look annoyed and even chided him, but as expected, he didn't notice what I was feeling.

I staggered slightly as if I was going to fall, and he flew to me like a butterfly flying toward a web and grabbed my shoulders to stabilize me.

The naive regressor looked at me with relief, but it didn't take long for him to be surprised.

Why?

It was all because he finally noticed that I was uncomfortable.

"I'm—" Kim Hyun-Sung was about to apologize.

However, I interrupted him. "I'm… not that kind of woman, Guild Master of Blue."

‘I’m sorry, Hyun-Sung… ’

“Excuse me?” he asked.

‘I’m really sorry… ’

“I’m not that kind of woman. You’ve been pretty open about your intentions for quite a while now,” I continued.

I had done many scummy things in the past, so what I said didn’t really hurt my conscience. However, the look of confusion on Kim Hyun-Sung’s face really broke my heart.

‘I’m sorry… ’

CHAPTER 453
OUR HYUN-SUNG (5)

My heart started hurting at the thought that I was going to hurt the lovely regressor's feelings.

If he asked me what was wrong, then I would feel guilty, but instead of doing that, he actually started thinking about what wrong he had committed. I wasn't sure if he knew how forceful he had been all this while, but he looked somewhat guilty.

'It's understandable.'

I kept on declining his offer, but he kept on sticking next to me. I was sure that his clinginess made him look more like a horny bastard rather than a knight protecting a lady.

A woman with lots of experience wouldn't think much about it, but the prim and proper Lee Ki-Yeon would definitely think that Kim Hyun-Sung had other motives. The physical contact just now definitely convinced Lee Ki-Yeon to think that way.

'He grabbed my shoulders, and wait—did he also touch my stomach? You cunning bastard… '

Of course, our Hyun-Sung didn't really do it intentionally, but he still had to take responsibility for kneading this virgin body of mine as if it were some kind of rice cake.

I had to act a bit more assertive…

Now that I thought about it, I was sure he had advanced magic knowledge, so he could have stabilized me without using his hands.

I wasn't sure if he had forgotten it, but it was unlike him to make that kind of mistake. I could see that he knew that as well, but the way he interpreted my words made me sigh.

'He still hasn't learned his lesson despite getting backstabbed so many times in his past life.'

Fortunately, he met me first. If he met some kind of gold digger, then he would have gotten into trouble.

There would have been nothing worse than seeing an article titled something along the lines of Guild Master of the Blue Guild Sexual Misconduct Allegations going around in Lindel.

Of course, I wouldn't let an article like that appear in Lindel's media in the first place. In addition, I couldn't really imagine him being in this kind of situation with another woman, but…

'Think of this as a lesson, Hyun-Sung.'

One would never know what would happen in one's life, and one could never guarantee anything. Pain was the most effective teacher, and I was sure that he would experience situations like this a few times in his life.

Therefore, it was better for him to taste it for the first time with Lee Ki-Yeon rather than with someone else.

'At least I'm going easy on you… '

I unknowingly nodded while Kim Hyun-Sung was still hesitating on what to say.

"…"

'I'll start the conversation.'

"I have been declining your offer, but you have been insisting on escorting me. It makes me think that you consider me a cheap woman."

"I think there's a misunderstanding. I—"

"I had a good time today, Mr. Hyun-Sung. I had fun, and I understand your feelings as well, but your actions are unacceptable. I'm sorry if I made you misunderstand, but I have no plans of doing *that* with you. You rescued me and bought me delicious food. I appreciate what you've done for me, but if I had known that you were expecting me

to do that kind of thing with you in exchange for what you have done to me, then I wouldn't have accepted your help," I continued.

"That's not it," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

I had to be more cold-hearted…

"Find someone else if you want a one-night stand," I added.

"Wait."

"Is this how you usually act? You said that you can't trust anyone… Was this your plan from the start?" I questioned.

"No, not at all, please—"

I started acting as if I were angry, and Kim Hyun-Sung looked like he had no idea how to fix the situation. He looked like he really wanted to explain, but he couldn't say anything because I kept on talking.

I was sure he was thinking that he got a bit rude, but he wasn't rude at all. Actually, it was a bit too much for Lee Ki-Yeon to act like this when he simply offered to take me home. In addition, the only physical contact we had was when he caught and stabilized me when I almost fell to the ground.

Of course, he also had a reasonable reason to accompany me to my lodgings.

Therefore, Kim Hyun-Sung wasn't being rude. Bitch Ki-Yeon was just too sensitive. No, she was more like a crazy woman because she basically trapped her benefactor.

I wasn't sure if Kim Hyun-Sung considered that, but based on his expression, I could see that his mind wasn't even thinking anymore.

He had really fallen for it, and my extreme acting was the number one contributor. I bit my lips with tears in my eyes, and I looked disappointed and ashamed. I looked like a tragic heroine who had just gotten betrayed by the person she trusted the most.

I couldn't see my current expression because there were no mirrors around her, but the look on Kim Hyun-Sung's face made me realize that my acting was good enough.

There was no need to drag this out. Time wasn't on my side, and I would eventually fall into a disadvantage if I were to drag this out. I had to get out of here as soon as possible.

"If I had known that you were that kind of person…" I muttered.

"I-It's a misunderstanding. That really wasn't my intention. I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings, but… I hope you'll believe me," Kim Hyun-Sung said.

"Can you swear to me that you had no other intentions?" I questioned.

"…"

'*Huh?*'

'You weren't supposed to hesitate, man. Even if you did have other intentions, you were supposed to deny it.'

"I won't deny it. I like you," he confessed.

'It seems that at the end of the day, you're a guy as well, Hyun-Sung.'

I knew that he liked me, even if it were just a tiny bit. I didn't think that he was lying when he said that because he even lowered his head and apologized.

"I'm sorry. I sincerely apologize if I made you uncomfortable."

'Give me some kind of excuse to use, man. You shouldn't have apologized right away, Hyun-Sung. Apologizing in a situation like this basically means that you're admitting your defeat… '

His sincere apology made me feel ashamed of myself. A tango would need two people, so I needed an excuse to be annoyed at him. Unfortunately for me, he chose to apologize directly rather than give a lousy excuse.

If I were to brute force my way here, then Lee Ki-Yeon would end up being the strange one. In the end, I had no choice but to back down. After all, time wasn't on my side.

"*Whew…*"

"…"

"I understand. Please lift your head," I said.

"I'm sorry," he repeated.

"No, I think I misunderstood you. I know you're not that type of person. It looks like I'm the one who had those embarrassing thoughts, but… it's probably best if you go back home today," I suggested.

"…"

"It's true that I'm kind of drunk, but I'm not a kid. I'm an epic-ranked adventurer, and I already told you that I can handle going back to my lodgings on my own, you know?"

"I understand your concern, but I hope you'll also understand that too much kindness can make people misunderstand. If you give me the same answer as last time, I might misunderstand you again…"

"And I'm not actually in the greatest mood right now. No matter your intentions, I'll definitely feel offended by it. You understand what I'm trying to say, right?" I asked.

"Yes, I understand," he said.

"We started off on the right foot, so I want us to part on a good note. I just want us to have good impressions of each other," I added.

"I see…"

"I'd like to part ways here. I'm sorry," I apologized.

"No, I should be the one who should apologize. Again, I'm sorry," he repeated.

'Stop apologizing, man… '

"Okay."

'Shit. I got too prim and proper… '

I got as prim and proper as the women in Joseon Dynasty. I was inwardly happy at the thought that I had successfully completed a difficult mission. I wasn't sure if I handled the situation well, but the outcome wasn't that bad.

Kim Hyun-Sung seemed to have realized the fact that being persistent here would make things worse. I was worried that he was going to follow me, but he had already realized his mistake, so I was sure that he wouldn't do anything unnecessary.

He would probably just watch me from afar.

Now, I just had to go to the Rift Inn. I was dizzy, but I started walking as fast as I could because I couldn't waste any more time.

Obviously, I couldn't show any signs of staggering or falling because I was sure that Kim Hyun-Sung would come flying toward me the moment I showed any signs of collapsing.

I was at my limits, both physically and mentally.

If I lost focus even for a moment, the burning mana inside me would definitely burst out.

I bit my lips and walked one step at a time. I thought I was taking big strides, but I was honestly worried about how I looked from behind. When I started running down the huge stairs of the main road, I couldn't help but get worried that I might fall.

'Shiiit… I think I'm done for… '

I staggered, and I miraculously avoided humiliating myself by grabbing the nearby handrail, but one of my shoes fell off.

'Damn it. I'm not Cinderella!'

"Miss Ki-Yeon! Your shoe…!"

I could hear Kim Hyun-Sung calling me from behind, but I couldn't respond to him.

'So he was still watching. That stalker-like bastard… just go home already!'

I had no more time, so I had no choice but to hope that he wasn't doing something unnecessary like running toward me to give me my shoe. Thankfully, it seemed like he wasn't going to do that.

I could feel a presence behind me, but I walked briskly without turning around.

'Please… '

The Rift Inn was getting closer.

I felt like I was going to lose my focus, so I hurriedly entered the inn.

'Please!'

Creak!

"Welcome to the Rift Inn!" the receptionist greeted.

"Legendary rank. Room. Hurry," I said before hurling a bunch of gold coins.

"*Ah*… okay," she replied.

"Keep the change," I said as I immediately started heading upstairs.

"The check-in—"

"I'm going to head up right now," I interrupted her.

"Okay."

"The room number," I requested.

"I'll guide you—"

"No need. Room number… h-hurry up," I stuttered.

"O-okay."

'I don't think he's crazy enough to follow me inside.'

However, I couldn't keep my guard down until I entered my room because I didn't know what was going on. My mind was blank, and my body felt like it couldn't resist nature's call anymore.

I declined the receptionist's offer and immediately entered my room.

I shut the door and finally sighed in relief upon entering a safe space.

"I'm safe…" I muttered.

When I relaxed, the burning mana in my body finally burst out. I glanced in the mirror and saw a familiar man.

Light Ki-Yeon was beautiful, but I was more fond of this look. I nodded at the sight of it.

I was a bit bothered that I lost one of Light Ki-Yeon's shoes, but I smiled because I successfully completed my mission.

'It was perfect.'

As long as Kim Hyun-Sung didn't do anything unnecessary like trying to find the owner of that shoe, I would say that I had completed this mission beyond perfection.



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